

I. Mary as the „Mother of God”.

1. Teaching of the Catholic Church.

The Council at Ephesus in 431 dogmatically proclaimed Mary as Θεοτόκος (*Theotokos*¹) – „Mother of God”, „God-bearer”. This doctrine has been accepted by the Roman Catholic Church and is included in the Catechism of Catholic Church.

The Nestorian heresy regarded Christ as a human person joined to the divine person of God's Son. Opposing this heresy, St. Cyril of Alexandria and the third ecumenical council, at Ephesus in 431, confessed “that the Word, uniting to himself in his person the flesh animated by a rational soul, became man” (Council of Ephesus, 431: DS 250)². Christ's humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception. For this reason the Council of Ephesus proclaimed in 431 that Mary truly became the Mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb: “Mother of God, not that the nature of the Word or his divinity received the beginning of its existence from the holy Virgin, but that, since the holy body, animated by a rational soul, which the Word of God united to himself according to the hypostasis, was born from her, the Word is said to be born according to the flesh” (Council of Ephesus: DS 251).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §466

Called in the Gospels “the mother of Jesus”, Mary is acclaimed by Elizabeth, at the prompting of the Spirit and even before the birth of her son, as “the mother of my Lord” (Luke 1:43; John 2:1, 19:25; cf. Matthew 13:55). In fact, the One whom she conceived as man by the Holy Spirit, who truly became her Son according to the flesh, was none other than the Father's eternal Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity. Hence the Church confesses that Mary is truly “Mother of God” (*Theotokos*; Council of Ephesus, 431: DS 251).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §495

Mary is truly “Mother of God” since she is the mother of the eternal Son of God made man, who is God himself.
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §509

Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary (cf. Proverbs 8:1-9:6; Sirach 24³). Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the “Seat of Wisdom”.
In her, the “wonders of God” that the Spirit was to fulfill in Christ and the Church began to be manifested:
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §721

The title „Mother of God” has been given to Mary based on the following logic:

1. Mary is the mother of Jesus.
2. Jesus is both God and man.
3. Mary is the mother of God.

1 To help the reader understand the spelling and pronunciation of Hebrew and Greek terms while only making a limited use of phonetic signs, Society of Biblical Literature transliterations will be used for ancient Greek words and Latin transliterations for Hebrew words.
2 To make the following of the text easier, the content of footnotes from the quoted paragraphs of Catechism of the Catholic Church has been put into parentheses.
3 Sirach belongs to the Apocrypha and is not an inspired scripture.

2. Teaching of the scripture.

2.1. Two natures of Jesus Christ.

To recognise the error of calling Mary the “Mother of God”, we must first understand that Christ possesses two natures – divine and human. This is called the hypostatic union, from the Greek ὑπόστασις (*hypostasis*) – „substantial nature, essence, actual being, reality” (Danker, Bauer, Arndt & Gingrich, 2000 – BDAG), and so „the union of natures/essences” – divine and human.

Both the Old and New Testament scriptures clearly teach that Jesus Christ is a divine Person (cf. Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3 and Luke 3:4; Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37 and Luke 20:41-44; Matthew 28:19; Luke 5:20-21; John 5:18; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:3; a comprehensive set of references for both the divinity and humanity of Christ is available in the Christology teaching by Dr. Robert Luginbill – <http://ichthys.com/4A-Christo.htm#1. Jesus Christ is truly Divine>).

14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.
Isaiah 7:14 NASB

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6 NASB

23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”
Matthew 1:23 NASB

18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.
John 1:18 NASB

58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” (cf. Exodus 3:14)
John 8:58 NASB

30 „I and the Father are one.”
John 10:30 NASB

5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.
John 17:5 NASB

28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” **29** Jesus *said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”
John 20:28-29 NASB

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, **4** who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, **5** whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.
Romans 9:3-5 NASB

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, **6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard being equal to God as something to hold on to, **7** but emptied Himself by taking the form of a slave and being born in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, **8** He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:17 NASB

9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, **10** and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

Colossians 2:9-10 NASB

13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus

Titus 2:13 NASB

6 And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

7 And of the angels He says,

"Who makes His angels winds,
And His ministers a flame of fire."

8 But of the Son He says,

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.

Hebrews 1:7-8 NASB

1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

2 Peter 1:1 NASB

20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

1 John 5:20 NASB

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Revelation 22:13 NASB

And as God Christ coexisted with the Father from eternity past.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:1-3 NASB

At the same time, since His birth through Mary, Christ is also fully human (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9).

24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Matthew 1:24-25 NASB

7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7 NASB

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,
Hebrews 2:14 NASB

2.2. Mary was only involved in Jesus receiving His human nature.

Christ is thus a divine Person and as God He coexisted with the Father from eternity past (John 1:1-3). In the ultimate act of humility and sacrifice He became a man in order to pay for humanity's sins (Philippians 2:5-8; 2 Corinthians 8:9), since God cannot die or suffer and could not Himself become a propitiatory sacrifice. Christ has always been God. He also became a man to be our Redeemer (Matthew 26:26-28; Romans 3:23-25, 4:25, 5:10; Ephesians 1:7; 4:32; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18; 1 John 2:2).

Mary was only involved in Jesus Christ receiving His human nature – she conceived by the Holy Spirit and is the mother of Christ in His humanity. It is obvious that in His deity He existed from eternity past long before Mary came into the world and as God He cannot have a mother. Remembering that Jesus only took His human body from Mary through divine conception, we can thus rightly call her “mother of Jesus” (John 2:1) or even “mother of our Lord” (Luke 1:43), as she is described by the scripture.

It is, however, wrong and unfounded to ascribe Mary the title “Mother of God” and the scripture never refers to her in this way. This title implies that Mary is also the mother of Jesus in His Deity. It contains a logical paradox according to which God – who is the Creator of all (and we know that it is Jesus Christ who is the Creator of the world – Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; etc.) – has a mother (!). The Roman Catholic Church seems to deny that they use the designation “Mother of God” in this sense, but if it is so, and if the Catholic Church accepts that Christ didn't receive His divine nature through Mary, then why is this designation used at all – since this is exactly what it implies? According to the Catholic position Jesus did not receive His divine nature from Mary, but she is still rightly called “Mother of God”, because Jesus whom she bore is God and man. The title “Mother of God” could only be ascribed to Mary, however, if she was the mother of Christ's divine nature, which she could not be and was not.

The title “Mother of God” is never mentioned in the Bible and this is perfectly understandable considering the teaching of the scripture on who God and Jesus Christ are and who Mary was. The term “mother” by definition implies that she precedes the child and at least initially has a status higher than the child. Using the designation “Mother of God” creates hence a false perception that such preeminence exists in the relationship between Mary and God or Christ in His divinity, which is absurd.

Using this title – which the scripture never uses nor does it provide any basis for us to do so – contributes to elevating Mary's status beyond what is written and, ultimately, to worshiping her. This error is thus one of the main foundations of the cult of Mary. It is, however, probably also one of its early consequences, since unbiblical veneration of Mary had already begun in the first centuries of Christianity. This error continues until today, as is the case in the Catholic Church. Only God should be the object of our worship – not any creature (Deuteronomy 6:5, 6:13, 10:20; Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8).

Those who call Mary the “Mother of God” should also ask themselves a question – if Mary is the “Mother of God”, then who is the “Father of God” (C. Streng, personal communication, February 13, 2018).

3. The origin of the title „Mother of God”.

3.1. Nestorianism and the Council at Ephesus.

Nestorius was an Antiochene monk born at the end of fourth century who believed that there was a separation between the divine and human nature of Christ, as if two persons existed in His body – one divine and one human. When he was nominated the patriarch of Constantinople in 428, the controversy about using the title of *Theotokos* towards Mary was already in progress. Nestorius stated that the title *Theotokos* was inappropriate, since that which was formed in the womb was not God. According to His own view of Christ's nature, he added that "God was within the one who was assumed", as if God did not become a man, but rather as if He came to inhabit a body. He preferred the title *Christotokos* – „Mother of Christ” - which offended those who believed in the unity of Christ's divine and human nature and which was taken as an attack on Christ's deity. Nestorius was opposed by Cyril of Alexandria, who gained the support of emperor Theodosius II (theological debate was a part of political struggle between the sees of Alexandria and Constantinople taking place at that time) and Nestorius' view was condemned at the Council of Ephesus. Calling Mary *Theotokos* has been officially proclaimed as legitimate, which is given as grounds for using this title towards Mary in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The Nestorian heresy regarded Christ as a human person joined to the divine person of God's Son. Opposing this heresy, St. Cyril of Alexandria and the third ecumenical council, at Ephesus in 431, confessed "that the Word, uniting to himself in his person the flesh animated by a rational soul, became man" (Council of Ephesus, 431: DS 250). Christ's humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception. For this reason the Council of Ephesus proclaimed in 431 that Mary truly became the Mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb: "Mother of God, not that the nature of the Word or his divinity received the beginning of its existence from the holy Virgin, but that, since the holy body, animated by a rational soul, which the Word of God united to himself according to the hypostasis, was born from her, the Word is said to be born according to the flesh" (Council of Ephesus: DS 251).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, §466

Both Nestorius and Cyril were wrong, however, and so is the teaching of the Catechism.

Nestorius was wrong to see in Jesus two natures which were only loosely connected with each other. Jesus has always been God and for us He also became a man. When He became a man, His divine nature was united with His human nature, which we call the hypostatic union. Jesus is fully God and fully man, but the scriptures clearly teach that He is one person, not two distinct persons independently inhabiting one body (please see references in section 2.1 above).

Cyril was wrong too, since the fact that Christ was God and man at the same time does not justify using the title „Mother of God” towards Mary. This title is never used in the scripture and can easily lead to serious errors, since it implies that God can have a mother. This can in turn provide a basis to perceive Mary as more than she was, even to the point of idolatrous veneration of her as goddess, which has in fact been taking place in the Roman Church. It is actually probable that Cyril's zealous defence of the title *Theotokos* was a result of him being himself an advocate of the unscriptural cult of Mary, as some statements in his writings indicate⁴. God is eternal, He has no beginning, nor a mother and no one can be called "Mother of God".

According to the Catechism the title "Mother of God" can be ascribed to Mary not because "the nature of the Word or his divinity received the beginning of its existence from the holy Virgin, but that, since the holy body, animated by a rational soul, which the Word of God united to himself according to the hypostasis, was born from her, the Word is said to be born according to the flesh". So the Church calls

4 In Letter to the Monks of Egypt (427; PG 77:13B) Cyril writes:

I am amazed that there are some who are entirely in doubt as to whether the holy Virgin should be called *Theotokos* or not. For if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, how is the holy Virgin who gave [Him] birth, not [*Theotokos*]?"

The questions of Mary's holiness, sinlessness and perpetual virginity are discussed in the following chapters of this work.

Mary the “Mother of God”, because from her womb Christ was born in whom the natures divine and human have been united. Since, however, Mary did not bring forth Christ’s divine nature – and it is obvious that she could not do that – then calling her “Mother of God” is an error.

This error shows how important it is not go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). The dogmatic proclamation of Mary as the “Mother of God” in the fifth century has eventually become one of the main foundations of the cult of Mary which has since often led to sheer idolatry.

Nestorius has thus wrongly separated the divine and human nature of Christ, as if they existed independently of one another and Christ was two persons inhabiting one body. Cyril understood this matter correctly, accepting the hypostatic union, but in an unjustified leap of logic took the hypostatic union as a basis for describing Mary as the “Mother of God”. The truth of the matter is that Jesus is God and man at the same time, but this doesn’t give any basis for calling Mary “Mother of God”, since she is not a mother of His divinity and she was only involved in Jesus receiving His human nature.

3.2. Jesus became the God-man at the point of birth, not conception.

Based on the declaration of the Ephesian Council the Catechism teaches that the divine person of Son of God “assumed” humanity and “made it his own” from his conception and based on that Mary became the Mother of God – since she carried the God-man in her womb.

Christ’s humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception. For this reason the Council of Ephesus proclaimed in 431 that Mary truly became the Mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb: “Mother of God, not that the nature of the Word or his divinity received the beginning of its existence from the holy Virgin, but that, since the holy body, animated by a rational soul, which the Word of God united to himself according to the hypostasis, was born from her, the Word is said to be born according to the flesh” (Council of Ephesus: DS 251).

Catechism of the Catholic Church, §466

Firstly, as discussed in depth above, even if Mary had carried the God-man in her womb, she could still not be called “Mother of God” not being the mother of Christ’s divine nature. Secondly, there is not a single statement in the Bible which teaches that the divine person of the Son of God “assumed” the human body and “made it his own” from the point of conception. According to the Word of God Jesus became the God-man at the point of birth, not conception and this means that Mary didn’t carry the God-man in her womb which is used as the basis for calling her “Mother of God”⁵.

Scripture says that man became a living being when God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”⁶.

7 Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.
Genesis 2:7 NASB

5 The explanation of this question which follows is based on Doctor Luginbill’s (n.d.) study “The Satanic Rebellion: Background to the Tribulation, Part 3: The Purpose, Creation and Fall of Man”. Retrieved from: <https://ichthys.com/Fall-sr3.htm>.

6 This verse also shows that man is dichotomous – consisting of spirit and body – and not trichotomous – consisting of spirit, body and soul. Genesis 2:7 says that when God breathed “breath of life” into man, he became “a living being” – Hebrew *נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה* (*nephesh chayyah*). The word *נֶפֶשׁ* (*nephesh*) and its Greek equivalent – *ψυχή* (*psychē*) – have often been translated “soul”, but, as this verse (and many others – Isaiah 32:6; Matthew 6:25, 16:25; Acts 7:14; 1 Peter 3:20) clearly teaches, this term describes the entire person – body and spirit – and should be translated as “living being”, “living person”. An in-depth discussion on dichotomy by Doctor Luginbill is available at: <https://ichthys.com/Fall-sr3.htm#4.%20The%20Dichotomy%20of%20Man>.

Adam's life thus began when God breathed the "breath of life" into him, not when He formed his body. Although his case is unique in that his body was formed of dust and our bodies come from procreation and develop in mother's womb, our life also begins when we receive the "breath of life" – our spirit. This happens at the point of birth, not at the point of conception⁷.

We must also note here that although Adam's body was divinely created (and so was Eve's), that didn't make it a deity. This body didn't even come to life until God imparted a human spirit to it. It is also the case with Mary's fetus – the fact that it was divinely created by the Holy Spirit doesn't make it itself a deity or a Son of God. Neither did this fetus become an alive human being and a Son of God until this body was combined with a human spirit at the point of birth (R. D. Luginbill, personal communication, February 17, 2018).

The human spirit is described in Hebrew by the word נְשָׁמָה (*neshamah*) which literally means "breath" and רוּחַ (*ruach*) which literally means "wind". In Greek the word πνεῦμα (*pneuma*) is used which means both wind and breath. There is no accident in this, since these words are a perfect analogy of the immaterial, invisible part of man which makes him alive – and which comes with the breath that begins at birth⁸.

5 "Thus says the Lord God to these bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. **6** I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the Lord.'" Ezekiel 37:5-6 NASB

5 Thus says God the Lord,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread out the earth and its offspring,
Who gives breath to the people on it
And spirit to those who walk in it,
Isaiah 42:5 NASB

1 The burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel.
Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,
Zechariah 12:1 NASB

54 He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Child, arise!" **55** And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat.
Luke 8:54-55 NASB

24 The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; **25** nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;
Acts 17:24-25 NASB

7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. **8** And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. **9** Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. **10** And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. **11** But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.

7 For this reason when Jesus was referring to regeneration through which we are able to see the Kingdom of God He said that we must be "born again" and not "conceived again" (John 3:3).

8 Although a fetus performs some lung movements in preparation for breathing while still in the womb, actual breathing does not start until birth.

Revelation 11:7-11 NASB

On the other hand, life ends when our spirit leaves the body.

14 If He should determine to do so,
If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath,
15 All flesh would perish together,
And man would return to dust.
Job 34:14-15 NASB

7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.
Ecclesiastes 12:7 NASB

50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.
Matthew 27:50 NASB

30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.
John 19:30 NASB

26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.
James 2:26 NASB

Just as we receive our spirit and become a living person at the moment of birth and not at the moment of conception, so it was with Christ. It is at the point of birth that His human spirit was united with His just-born human body and it is then that He came into this world as the Son of God and Messiah and "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14).

Hebrews 10:5-7 describes the arrival of Christ who replaced the Old Testament sacrifices which were only a foreshadowing of His payment for our sin on the cross and the declaration of this arrival is spoken when He comes into the world – not when He is conceived.

5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says,
"Sacrifice and offering You have not desired,
But A body You have prepared for ME:
6 IN whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure.
7 "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come
(IN the scroll of the book it is written of ME)
TO do Your will, O God."
Hebrews 10:5-7 NASB

This also explains why the angel uses a neuter when speaking to Joseph in Matthew 1:20 - "that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" and does not say "Son of God" or "Jesus Christ who was conceived in her". He does use the designation "Son" when referring to Jesus who was to be born.

20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."
Matthew 1:20-21 ESV

Gabriel speaks in the same way when addressing Mary.

35 And the Angel answered her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for this very reason that which is going to be born will be called holy, the Son of God".
Luke 1:35 RL

We can see that in both passages it is the birth that is presented as the main event, not the conception. “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21) and “for this very reason that which is going to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (Luke 1:35) – Christ will be called the Son of God when He is born. This is consistent with Old Testament teaching, where it is the birth of the Messiah that is the key prophesied event.

14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.
Isaiah 7:14 NASB

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6 NASB

It was the birth of Christ that was celebrated by the angels, not His conception.

8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. **10** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; **11** for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” **13** And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,
14 “Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”
Luke 2:8-14 NASB

This is when God brings His Son into this world.

5 For to which of the angels did He ever say,
“You are MY Son,
Today I have begotten You”?
And again,
“I will be A Father to Him
And HE shall be A Son to ME”?
6 And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says,
“And let all the angels of God worship Him.”
Hebrews 1:5-6 NASB

Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit which enabled Christ’s human body to be free from the sin nature (see chapter III, point 4). The fact that Mary’s fetus was divinely created doesn’t make it deity, however, just as the fact that Adam and Eve’s bodies were divinely created doesn’t make them deities. That didn’t even make them physically alive until a human spirit was created for them.

Mary’s task was to prepare a body for Christ (Hebrews 10:5) that would be free from sin. At the point of birth this human body was united with His human spirit and Jesus Christ, God from eternity past, also became a human being. God became the God-man. Mary thus did not carry the God-man in her womb.

5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says,
“Sacrifice and offering You have not desired,
But A body You have prepared for ME;
6 IN whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure.
7 “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come
(IN the scroll of the book it is written of ME)

TO do Your will, O God.”
Hebrews 10:5-7 NASB

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
John 3:6 NASB

4. Summary.

1. The Council at Ephesus in 431 dogmatically proclaimed Mary as Θεοτόκος (*Theotokos*) – „Mother of God”, „God-bearer”. This doctrine has been accepted by the Roman Catholic Church and is included in the Catechism of Catholic Church.
2. The title „Mother of God” has been given to Mary based on the following logic:
 1. Mary is the mother of Jesus.
 2. Jesus is both God and man.
 3. Mary is the mother of God.
3. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. Possession of both the divine and human nature by Christ is called the hypostatic union.
4. As God Jesus coexisted with the Father from eternity past. He became a man to redeem humanity from its sins.
5. Jesus became a man through Mary. Fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah Mary conceived by the Holy spirit and bore a Son. Mary is thus the Mother of Jesus in His human nature.
6. Since in His deity Christ existed from eternity past and as God He cannot have a mother, it is an error to call Mary the “Mother of God”, because she was only involved in Christ receiving His human nature.
7. The scripture never refers to Mary as the „Mother of God” and gives no basis to do so.
8. Using this title contributes to elevating Mary’s status contrary to the biblical teaching and giving her glory and veneration that are not rightfully hers and should only be given to God. This error is one of the main foundations of the cult of Mary, but probably in itself one of its early consequences. Unscriptural worship of Mary began in the first centuries of Christianity and has since often lead to idolatrously treating her as a demi-goddess or goddess.
9. The proclamation of Mary as the “Mother of God” at the Council of Ephesus was connected with the controversy regarding the relationship between the divine and human nature of Christ. According to Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople at that time, between the divine and human nature of Christ there was a separation, as if two persons – divine and human – inhabited one body. Cyril of Alexandria defended the correct teaching of the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ and at the Council prevailed against Nestorius, whose view was condemned and anathematized.
10. However, in an unjustified leap of logic the hypostatic union was taken as the basis for describing Mary as the „Mother of God”. According to Cyril and his supporters Mary should be called the “Mother of God” since she bore Jesus Christ, who is God and man at the same time. Although it is true that Jesus is God and man, Mary through divine conception only took part in preparing a human body for Him. She was not the mother of His divine nature and so should not be called “Mother of God”. There are indications that Cyril defended the title “Mother of God”, since he was himself one of the early advocates of venerating Mary in a way that is contrary to the scripture.

11. Equally erroneous is the statement that “Mary truly became the Mother of God by the human conception of the Son of God in her womb: ‘Mother of God, not that the nature of the Word or his divinity received the beginning of its existence from the holy Virgin, but that, since the holy body, animated by a rational soul, which the Word of God united to himself according to the hypostasis, was born from her, the Word is said to be born according to the flesh” (Council of Ephesus: DS 251). There is not a single statement in the Bible that the divine person of the Son of God “assumed” the human body and “made it his own” from the point of conception.
12. The Word of God teaches that human life begins at birth when God gives us our spirit, not at conception. Just as we become a living being at the point of birth, so it was with Christ.
13. The fact that Mary’s fetus was divinely created by the Holy Spirit doesn’t make it deity, just as the fact that Adam and Eve’s bodies were divinely created doesn’t make them deities. Neither Mary’s divinely created fetus nor Adam and Eve’s bodies even became alive until a human spirit was created for them.
14. This means that Mary did not carry the God-man in her womb, which is erroneously used as the basis for calling her “Mother of God. Mary’s conceiving by the Holy Spirit prepared a body for Jesus which was free from the sin nature. This body was united with His human spirit at the point of birth and He became the God-man who came into the world.

The correct logical argument thus goes as follows:

1. Mary is the mother of Jesus.
2. Jesus is God and man.
3. Mary is only the mother of Christ’s human nature and is not the „Mother of God”.

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See also:

- <https://carm.org/is-mary-the-mother-of-god>
- <https://carm.org/mary-mother-of-god-logical-fallacy>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/Mary-mother-God-theotokos.html>
- <http://ichthys.com/mail-Only-Begotten-Mother-Of-God-On-This-Rock.htm>
- <https://ichthys.com/mail-life-begins-at-birth.htm>
- <https://ichthys.com/mail-John%20leapt.htm>
- <https://ichthys.com/mail-Culture-and-ChristianityIV.htm> (question 6)