

Our Most Holy Lady and the Church (Archimandrite Iakovos Kanakis)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Our Lady isn't just an ordinary woman, nor, however, is she a goddess. She's a special person whom God selected to be His mother and, by extension, the mother of the whole world. At Christmas, which we're gradually approaching, theological discourse quite rightly centres on the Person of Jesus Christ, Who is God and human. The day after Christmas, however, we celebrate the synaxis of the Mother of God, in other words the assembly of the faithful to celebrate the person(s) who, in a sense 'brought' us the feast on the previous day, in this case Our Lady who gave us Christ.



The relationship between Christ and Mary is unique, since the Mother of God and she alone, is His mother and His servant. In her response to the angel's greeting, she agreed to comply with the mystery of the incarnation. She gave birth to God, representing His people and confirming a new testament with Him. She's not a symbol, she's a person who, through her womb, provided Christ with His human nature, since this was something which, until then, He didn't have. She was a normal person and, therefore Christ, whom she bore, was both normal and perfect.

The Fathers of the Church call her the 'Second Eve', or the 'New Eve', since her response, 'I agree' [literally 'May it be'] expunged the 'initial curse' and opened the way for the 'new Adam' to enter into communion with God. But there was something else about the willing consent of Our Lady: her identification with the Church. The Church and Mary are identical and parallel as regards the mystery of the incarnation. It's a mystery of motherhood and of adoption, at the same time, which is activated by the Holy Spirit (Matth. 1, 20; Lk. 1, 35). This is realized first and foremost as regards Christ (Lk. 1, 31; Acts 12, 5) but also for the members of His body (Jn. 19, 26).

Let's look more closely at the relationship between Our Lady and the Church.

As we've said, the connection between these two is unbreakable, because, through Our Lady, God became a human person and therefore the brother and friend of all

of us. He's the head of the Church of which we're all members. The Church is His body and He is its head (Col. 1, 18). We're grateful for this great miracle and we honour Our Lady for making our adoption by Christ a possibility. This is why Our Lady isn't absent from the Church, from our worship, our hymns, our icons and from our daily prayers to her. The Mother Church is the Mother of God and, in some measure, they're identical, since Christ is the essence and centre of both of them. Christ lies in the womb of His mother, but we also find Him in the Church, which resembles her womb. Both of them give us Christ incarnate, perfect God and perfect human.

The Church is the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5, 32), a bride that's a virgin and that was 'built' upon the Virgin Mary. So every Christian who wishes to be united to Christ is called upon to be His bride. Saint Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, underlines this when, addressing the Corinthians, he says: 'I'm possessive of you with the possessiveness of God, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ' (II Cor. 11, 2).