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## Mother

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## Mother

Whenever we give a thought to our mothers, we implicitly acknowledge truths about our humanity, especially our initial total dependence upon another person for our very existence. Besides the many and varied emotional associations, our thoughts can lead us to gratitude if we take a bit of time for reflection, and for considering who we are as unique individuals who began life within our mothers' bodies.

Those who think of themselves as self-made individuals are usually taking into account only their years of conscious activity. We can be grateful for all that we have accomplished thus far in our lives, but our hearts expand with a deeper form of gratefulness when we consider the time in our lives before we can consciously remember, and reflect on the earliest nurturing and formation we surely received. We were cared for, no matter how we might now estimate the degree to which we were loved. When we were born, we were like computers without software or cell phones without batteries. Much that was essential was given to us, preparing us to take our own initiatives once we passed from infancy to childhood and beyond.

Thinking about mothers might bring us to a bit of genuine humility, in that we did not set ourselves into this world, nor did we arrange any of our earliest experiences. Rather than an admission of some weakness to be outgrown, our former total dependence offers a necessary insight for us to have an honest and fulfilling relationship with God. Just as it would make no sense to think or to say that our mothers had no effects upon us that are still relevant to our present lives, so also it would do us no good at all to imagine that God saw to it that we were born, and then had no part in our development.

The good news of dependence, of reflecting upon one aspect of "mother," is that the responsibilities we have for our own lives is not absolute. None of us was or is a completely isolated individual. God does not meet up with us at some point in our lives, and perhaps come to know us and even to love us. Rather, God loved us into being, and has been, and is, part of every movement of human love ever directed towards us even from before we were born, and is the initiator of the very desire within us to grow, to know and to love.

Reflecting on the "together" aspect of our lives does not diminish either our freedom to choose or the significance of our decisions, but helps us to appreciate (which is a form of gratitude) the deepest value and most significant capacity of humans: to love and to be loved. We are most ourselves not only, and certainly not exclusively, when we act out of love in

service to others, but also when we accept the great variety of ways in which we are loved. God is love: a community of interactive love, as Trinity. We are created in and for love for one another.

That we might more readily experience God's love for us, God became human in Jesus Christ. How human? He has a mother, Mary.