* In Japan she is called [Our Lady of Akita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_Akita)
* In Portugal, [Our Lady of Fatima](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_Fatima)
* She is Our Lady of Good Health in India
* In parts of Germany, and as of late, in Argentina… Mary, The Undoer of Knots
* Our Lady of Knock holds a special place in the heart of the Irish and the Polish know her as the Black Madonna
* Italy, France and Spain have so many titles for her that it would take probably 5 minutes just to rattle them off.
* Closer to home, we know her as the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary and Our Lady of Guadalupe

Over the last 2000 years, the Virgin Mary has been called by many titles.

But when we insist that she is the Mother of God, many people bristle. The argument is always the same. How can God, without beginning and end have a mother? The Messiah, Jesus the Christ had a mother, simple enough, but God? How is that possible?

This was no small question in the early years of the Church, and it was a vital one. The problem was not nearly so much about the role of Mary – but rather the nature of Jesus. If Mary could be the Mother of the Man, but not of God, then was there ever an incarnation?

To deny Mary the title “Mother of God” makes of Jesus a dichotomy, a split personality.  It would mean that God had not really embraced our humanity so as to become human.  Rather, the humanity of Christ is somehow sealed off from the divine, as if human nature was so foul that God had to keep it at arm’s distance.

But what actually happened - was that at the Annunciation, God did fully embraced our human nature. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son… became human. He is not God… man, he is not God in a people suit, but He is God-Man. United as one, He is able to save us because He is one of us.

And that entirely new nature of God-Man required a natural Mother, and Mary is that person.

But in recognizing her as Mother, we are saying and implying more than biology. That the nature of Jesus was so interwoven with our human-ness that God needed to be nurtured just as each one of us needs nurturing.

Just as we need mothers to be born, we need a mother to train us up in the ways of God, to teach us respect for ourselves and others. To be an example of unconditional love in our lives so that we can know it is possible for God to love us.

The tainted human nature makes it difficult to be a perfect mother or father, but Mary, untouched by original sin, or any sin is an entirely different story.

Mary, the Mother of God, is a Mother we can turn to, without fear of rejection. She is worthy of our trust and our admiration.

It is good to be reminded of the importance and special place Mary has in God’s plan, in the Church and in our hearts.

But, THAT BEING SAID, again, we primarily celebrate, not Mary, but what God did, through Mary.

And it is here that we see that the when is almost as important as the why.

So why do we Catholics celebrate the Feast of Mary the Mother of God on the Octave, the eight day, of Christmas? Because this celebration strikes at the very heart of Christmas.  The songs we sing and the cards we write extol the babe of Bethlehem as Emmanuel, God-with-us.  He is so with us that after Gabriel’s visit to the Virgin of Nazareth, the Divine Word can never again be divided from our humanity.  What God has joined, let no man separate so let’s celebrate.