The figures of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary are central to the Christian faith, but few realize they also hold a prominent place in Islam. The Quran, the sacred book of Muslims, mentions Jesus (*Isa*) and Mary (*Maryam*) with profound reverence. For Catholics, understanding these references can expand our appreciation for these beloved figures in our faith, helping us see how God works through history and how these sacred figures inspire different cultures and religions.

This article explores how the Quran portrays Jesus and Mary, compares these references with Catholic tradition, and reflects on how these insights can enrich our spirituality and deepen our love for them.

Mary in the Quran: The Most Elevated Woman

One of the most beautiful surprises when reading the Quran is discovering the deep respect and love for Mary. She is mentioned more times in the Quran than in the New Testament. In fact, she is the only woman named explicitly in the Quran and is honored with an entire chapter dedicated to her life, *Sura Maryam* (Chapter 19), reflecting her extraordinary importance.

In Islam, Mary is recognized as a pious, pure, and God-chosen woman. The Quran describes how an angel appears to her to announce that she will bear a holy son, a miracle conceived by the Spirit of God. In Christianity, this aligns with the angel Gabriel's annunciation in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 1:26-38). While the Quran does not develop the doctrine of the Incarnation as Christianity does, it emphasizes God's divine intervention in the conception of Jesus, portraying Mary as a model of obedience and faith.

The Purity of Mary

The Quran declares Mary as a woman "chosen above all women" (*Sura 3:42*). For Catholics, this resonates profoundly with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which affirms that Mary was preserved from original sin from the moment of her conception. While Islam does not articulate this concept dogmatically, the emphasis on her purity reflects a similar reverence.

Mary's Role in Salvation History

The Quran's narrative of Mary giving birth to Jesus is striking. It describes how she, facing

misunderstanding from her community, gives birth alone under a palm tree and is comforted by God, who provides her with water and dates (*Sura 19:22-26*). While this account differs from the Gospels' Nativity story, it highlights her bravery and total dependence on God—virtues Catholics also celebrate in her.

Jesus Christ in the Quran: Prophet, Miracle Worker, and Word of God

Jesus Christ, or *Isa* in Arabic, is a prominent figure in the Quran, where he is given unique titles and described through several episodes of his life. However, Islam views him primarily as a significant prophet, not as the Son of God or the Savior. This distinction may seem vast, but it also highlights shared elements worthy of reflection.

Jesus as the "Word of God"

In the Quran, Jesus is called "a word from God" (*Sura 4:171*), a title that echoes the prologue of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word" (Jn 1:1). For Catholics, this underscores the uniqueness of Jesus as the Word made flesh, even though Islam does not develop this idea in terms of divine incarnation.

The Miracles of Jesus

The Quran recounts several miracles performed by Jesus, including healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, and even raising the dead (*Sura 3:49*). These acts, attributed to the power of God, align with the Gospel narratives. However, the Quran includes a miracle not mentioned in Christianity: Jesus creates a bird from clay and gives it life. For Catholics, these stories reinforce the image of Jesus as the mediator of divine power.

Jesus and the Second Coming

Interestingly, the Quran suggests that Jesus will return at the end of times as a sign of the Day of Judgment (*Sura 43:61*). While the theological context differs, this idea of a second coming aligns with our belief in the Parousia, when Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead.

Similarities and Differences: A Theological Perspective

While Islam and Christianity differ profoundly in their view of Jesus as the Son of God and Savior, the Quranic references offer a perspective that, far from contradicting, complements our understanding through faith. Mary and Jesus in the Quran are symbols of virtue, obedience, and closeness to God—values Catholics also venerate.

Spiritual Applications for Our Lives

As Catholics, what can we learn from these Quranic references?

1. **Reflecting on Mary's Faith and Obedience**
   Mary inspires us to say "yes" to God, just as she did before the angel Gabriel. The Quranic narratives reinforce her complete trust in God, even in the face of trials. Meditating on her example can help us face our own challenges with faith and courage.
2. **Admiration for the Purity and Humility of Jesus**
   While the Quran does not recognize Jesus as the Son of God, it highlights his humility and life as a sign of God's action in the world. This invites us to rediscover Jesus' humanity and his mission as a bridge between God and humanity.
3. **Engaging with People of Other Faiths**
   Understanding these stories gives us a tool to connect with Muslims from a place of mutual respect. We can find common ground that allows us to share our faith authentically and meaningfully.

Conclusion: Rediscovering Jesus and Mary

The references to Jesus Christ and Mary in the Quran remind us that divine truths resonate across cultures and traditions. For us as Catholics, these mentions not only deepen our understanding of these sacred figures but also call us to live as witnesses to the truth revealed in Christ. Let us meditate on Mary as a model of obedience and Jesus as the true path to God, allowing these inspirations to guide our daily lives toward holiness.