

What is the difference between Worship or Adoration and Veneration?

For centuries now, Catholics have been accused of the practice of worshipping Mary and the saints. Catholics have been asked by the Church to properly respond to such statements by informing or educating the other person that we “venerate,” not worship, them.

The Bible nowhere instructs followers of Jesus, the Christ to offer worship, veneration, adoration, or anything similar to anyone, but God alone. Nowhere does the New Testament describe any followers of Jesus worshipping, venerating, or adoring anyone other than God. Peter refused to receive adoration from Cornelius (Acts 10:25–26), and Paul and Barnabas were equally adamant that the people of Lystra not venerate them (Acts 14:15). Twice in the Book of Revelation (19:10; 20:7), the John begins to worship an angel, and the angel instructs him: “Worship God!” Mary and the saints who have gone to heaven before us would say the same thing: “Worship God! And God alone!”

To venerate is to regard with great respect or to revere. *Veneration* can be defined as “respect or awe directed toward someone due to his/her value or greatness.”

When we show respect for parents, for clergy, for spouses, for the saints (our Blessed Mother, the Holy Virgin Mary who is first among saints)) and angels, we honor the vocation or ministry in life that God has given to them with respect to us. Such ***veneration*** (in Latin "dulia") is relative, proportioned to the God-given role they played or continue to play in the history of humankind and of the Church.

Mary's role in history was the greatest (beginning with her “Yes” (her “fiat”) to consciously and openly cooperate with God’s plan for human salvation through her via the birth of her son, Jesus, the Christ (the Son of God)). Thus, we show her the utmost veneration (in Latin "hyperdulia"). We cannot give to any human being, to any creature (such as an angel), an infinite or absolute veneration. It must always be "in so far as they have a relation to God and His natural and supernatural order for the universe." (cf. *Pacem in Terris, April 11, 1963, Pope John XIII*)

We also show veneration to God, however with God it is absolute and unconditional (in Latin "latria") and more appropriately referred to as our worship or adoration of Him. He is the ultimate and divine source of all good things, without which no creature can be a conduit (i.e., a Prophet, Apostle, etc.) to us of either natural or supernatural good (life, salvific grace, etc.). After all, it is Mary’s son (not Mary herself) who brought us a path to salvation and eternal life.

Such unlimited and absolute veneration (reserved to God and our one God alone) is what most people properly refer to as ***worship or adoration*** today.

To “*instruct the ignorant*” is the first Catholic Spiritual Work of Mercy. Ignorant may sound like a harsh word, but the true definition of the word is one is who “un-informed” or un-educated on a subject matter. What is not known or understood can hurt a person, not only physically or legally, but also spiritually. It is a matter of spiritual life or death. It is a merciful act of charity and love for the other to inform them about the faith and assist them on the road to their eternal salvation.

(SR:

<http://www.ewtn.com/v/experts/showmessage.asp?number=466274&Pg=Forum8&Pgnu=1&recnu=7> and <https://www.gotquestions.org/veneration.html>)