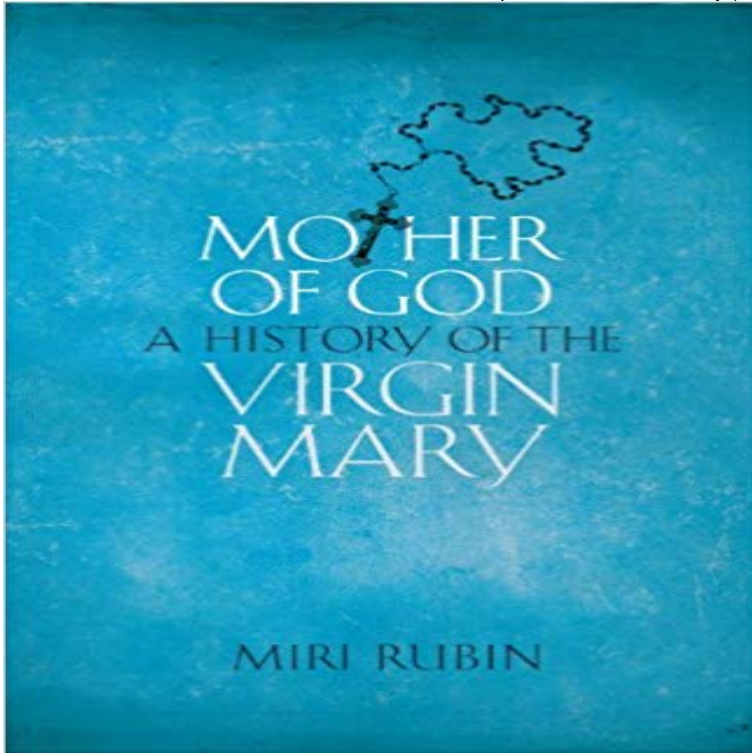


## Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary



Mary, the mother of Jesus, is one of the most powerful, influential and complex of all religious figures. The focus for women, the inspiration of faith, the subject of innumerable paintings, sculptures, pieces of music and churches, Mary is so entangled in our world that it is impossible to conceive of the history of Western culture and religion without her. Miri Rubin's *Mother of God* is a major work of cultural imagination. Mary's role in the Gospels is a relatively minor one, and yet in the centuries during which Christianity established itself she emerged as a powerful, strange and ungovernable force, endlessly remade and reimagined by wave after wave of devotees, ultimately becoming a sort of God, in ways that have always made some Christians uneasy. Whether talking about the vast public festivals celebrating Mary that sweep up entire communities or the intense private agony of individual devotion, Rubin's book is a triumph of sympathy and intelligence. Throughout Christianity's journey from mysterious origins to global religion, the Mother of God has been a profound presence in countless lives - *Mother of God* is the story of that presence and a book that raises profound questions about the human experience.

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