



# The Virgin Saint Mary

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# Lecture Outline

- There are three doctrines related to the person of Saint Mary:
- Saint Mary the Ever-Virgin
- Saint Mary the Mother of God
- Saint Mary the intercessor of all mankind



## Part 1



# Saint Mary the Ever-Virgin

Before pregnancy (*Anti-partum*),  
During pregnancy (*partum*), and  
After pregnancy (*post-partum*)

# Biblical Reality of the Virginity of Saint Mary

- The virginity of St. Mary is not a matter of her own private life, but rather a 'biblical reality', which belongs with our faith in Jesus Christ.
- For when the Word of God was Incarnated, He was not particular about the kind of place where he would be cradled, or the clothes He would wear, or the food He would eat; but **He was definitely very particular about the Virgin who was to be His mother.**
- The prophet Isaiah gives us a prophetic sign of the Virginal Birth: ***"Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel."*** (Isaiah 7:14)

# Hebrew Scriptural Evidence

- Here the text refers to St. Mary the virgin mother of Emmanuel, directly and literally.
- It is very accurate, describes St. Mary's state as being **virgin** and **engaged at the same time**.
- For the Hebrew term used for "**virgin**" is '**almah**' and not 'betulah' nor 'issa'.
- The word '**almah**' means a **virgin maiden who may be engaged**, while '**betulah**' means a virgin who is not engaged.
- The word '**issa**' means a married lady.

# Saint Mary's status

- If the Scripture uses the word '*issa*', it does not signify an extraordinary miracle about to be performed by God.
- Why? because the married woman can conceive and bear a son.
- If it uses the word '*betulah*', it does not describe the state of St. Mary, who was engaged to St. Joseph.
- **But it uses the word 'almah', which fits her state accurately, as a virgin and engaged to St. Joseph who protected her and became a faithful witness of her chastity, leaving no chance for any doubts or suspicion.**

# “The Virgin” versus “a virgin”

- It is important to understand that this is a singular event that happened only once in all the history of the universe.
- Only the Virgin Mary gave birth in this miraculous way and no other virgin ever has done or ever will do the same.
- Also, it is worth noting that this word *'almah'* is used in this sentence to mean the **continuation of the state of virginity**, and for this reason it has been translated **'the Virgin'**, and not **'a virgin'**, to describe Emmanuel's mother as the Virgin even after her Child's birth.

# Perpetual (Ever) Virginity

- Another prophet confirms St. Mary's perpetual (or ever) virginity, as he says:
- ***“When he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looked towards the east, it was shut. Then the Lord said to me: This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it, because the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it, therefore it shall be shut”*** (Ezekiel 44: 1-3).



# Saint Mary is the Gate

- This sealed eastern gate is a symbol of St. Mary's perpetual virginity.
- For the Lord alone entered her womb, and this gate was never opened to another; its seals were not broken.
- For this reason, the Coptic Orthodox Church sings the following hymn:
- ***"Ezekiel witnessed and told us: I have seen an eastern gate. The Lord, the Saviour entered it, and it remains shut as it was before"*** (Sunday Adam Psalia).

# Her Ever-Virginity and our Faith in Jesus Christ

- The Virginal Birth which happened once, never to be repeated, is a proof of our faith in **Jesus Christ, that He is not of this world, but from on high, the Son of God.**
- This is what the angel Gabriel proclaimed to St. Mary herself when she asked him: **"How can this come about, since I do not know man?!"**, "the Holy Spirit will come upon you ", the angel answered, "and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, and so the Child will be called Son of God" (Luke 1: 34, 35).
- Subsequently, this Virginal Birth formed a principal element in the Early Church, not because it says something about St. Mary, but rather because **it reveals the Person and Nature of Jesus Christ.**
- In brief, this doctrine **"the Virginal Birth"** in fact is the outward sign of the mystery of Incarnation.
- For it affirms that **Jesus Christ who is the real son of a real mother, was not conceived of human seed, but of the Holy Spirit.**
- Although the Son of Man, He has no hereditary sin (like the original sin), but stands at the Head of a new human race.



## Part 2



# Saint Mary the mother of God

She is the mother of God in that  
God the Logos was born of her

# The Holy Bible says that God was born of her

- The prophet Isaiah said: ***"The Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His name Emmanuel which means God is with us"*** (Isaiah 7:14).
- The Archangel Gabriel said to the Virgin: ***"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David"*** (Luke 1:31-32)
- St. Elizabeth the mother of St. John the Baptist said to the Virgin: ***"But why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me"*** (Luke 1:43).

# St. Mary's Motherhood

- Two important facts to consider:

① Jesus was **genuinely** (really/truly) born of St. Mary which means that He was not a phantom (ghost), but took on **real flesh from a real mother.**

② Jesus Christ born of St. Mary is the eternal Son of God, **Who has no beginning.**

# The heresy of Nestorius of Constantinople

- Nestorius denied the title of "***Theotokos***" or "***Mother of God***" to **Saint Mary**.
- In **431 A.D.** a **Holy Ecumenical Council** was held at **Ephesus** to discuss this heresy.
- At this council 200 bishops gathered under the leadership of **Pope Saint Cyril I**, the Pillar of Faith.
- The Fathers of the Council ruled that the Ever-Virgin Saint Mary is rightly titled ***Theotokos for she indeed "gave birth to God the Logos"*** and they wrote the introduction to the Creed: "***we exalt you, the mother of the True Light and we glorify you O Virgin saint and Theotokos (Mother of God) for you brought forth unto us the Savior of the whole world...***"



Part 3



# Saint Mary the intercessor

As mother of God, her  
intercession excels more than that  
of the heavenly and the earthly



# Intercession of the Theotokos

- In our Orthodox Church, we cannot accept any mediator between God and people, except Jesus Christ, the sole High Priest of the heavens, and the Sacrifice by whose blood we receive the reconciliation and remission of sins.
- There is no other name under heaven by whom we can be saved except that of Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12).
- Perhaps one may ask: if that is the case why is it in the Church rites that believers ask for the intercession of St. Mary along with the angels and the prayers of the Martyrs and Saints? Are there any evangelical texts that prove the Saints' intercession?
- As the soul moves closer to God, in a deeper union with Jesus Christ it becomes more attached to others, and hence prays for them, asks for their salvation.
- This is specifically the concept of "intercession".



# Limits of Her Intercession:

- In the story of the wedding in Cana of Galilee, we can realize the limits of the intercession of the Mother and Virgin Mary.
- For she asked her Son: "they have no wine!!".
- Of course the Lord was aware of that, and surely he does not need to be reminded of the needs of his children or be told about it.... But our Lord Jesus, who is full of love, is pleased to see the mutual feelings of love in his mother and his children.
- Her request was only made once, but he answered "woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet".
- The Lord's reply signifies the intercession of the Virgin Mary:
- **First:** It shows clearly the trust of his mother in Him, for she did not repeat her request, but with every assurance and confidence she said to the people "Do whatever He tells you". She was positive that her Son would answer her request for His children.
- **Second:** Through her conversation with the people of the wedding we can visualize her role in intercession. Certainly it is not giving worship to her personality.
- Let us ask for her prayers and intercessions that we maybe able to fulfill the commandment of her Son.
- Thus through her motherhood to the Lord, we can be saved by the grace of the Blood of her Only-Begotten Son.