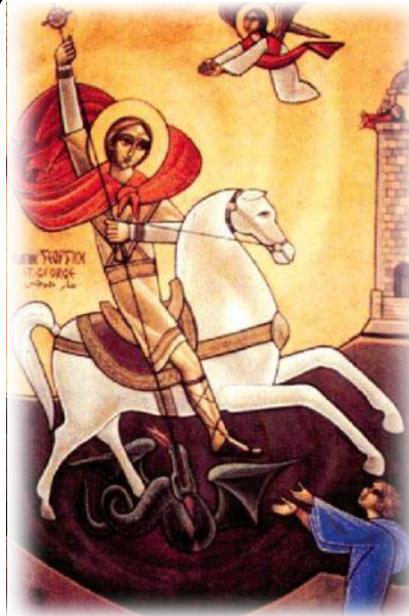


St George Newsletter

AUGUST 2012



But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luke 1:43



Saint Mary: An Icon of Simplicity

Bishop Youssef, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

+Obedience

St. Mary heard the message from the angel; and although she was totally baffled by the seeming impossibility and absurdity of it, yet because the message was coming from God, she answered obediently "Let it be to me according to your word" without thinking of the hazardous, vague, undefined consequences. Was it not because of her obedience perhaps we would still be hopelessly in bondage with no future nor destiny. St. Mary's obedience came like fresh water bringing satisfaction to the human race "As cold water to a weary soul, so is good news from a far country" (Proverbs 25:25). The outcome of obedience is always a hundredfold blessing. St. Mary is revered by all generations.

+Innocence

This trait is an essential requirement for entry into the kingdom of heaven; "unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). To be Christlike is to return and be childlike. St. Mary's innocence is both concealed and manifest in her total obedience. She, in a childlike manner, followed Joseph in their flight to Egypt; accepted to give birth to her mysteriously begotten Son in a manger; watched signs and wonders happen around her without questioning, freaking out, nor fainting. Who would behave like that except someone with a childlike attitude? In her innocence, the "beautiful dove" was like Noah's dove carrying the branch of Olive (Jesus Christ) bringing good tidings to Noah (the prototype of humanity that was in captivity) (Genesis 8:8-12). In many of her apparitions, St. Mary was seen by people as a beautiful dove hovering in the sky.

+Modesty

Having been informed from heaven concerning her future status as the "full of grace", "blessed among women", "found grace with God", the mother-to-be of "the Son of the most high", "the King of kings and Lord of Lords", St. Mary was in a position to be psychologically and physically ready for grandeur and glamour. Yet, no artist portrayed her except in her ordinary attire of a humble, middle class Jewish girl who, having been dedicated by her parents to God, grew up in the temple. David wrote about St. Mary's inner beauty and transparency saying,

“the royal daughter is all glorious within the palace” (Psalm 45:13). She, in her modesty qualified for St. Peter’s description of a modest woman whose beauty is not in “arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel; rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God” (1 Peter 3:3-4). Even with the entire honor her Son has bestowed upon her, the “At Your right hand stands the **queen**” (Psalm 45:9) still chooses simple people to visit and simple churches to appear in.

+Affability

The mother of God is recorded to have done lots of merciful acts to the extent of giving away her food (oral tradition). The little that the four gospels have recorded about St. Mary reveals her loving character to her relatives, neighbors and her Son’s disciples. As a prayerful, sociable person, she did not miss being with the apostles the night of the descent of the Holy Spirit; thus receiving the Holy Spirit just like them, although she was not assigned the service of Evangelism.

+Receptivity

No one can fathom the magnitude of the message delivered by a messenger from heaven to a fourteen year old simple Jewish girl. The only inquiry that the Virgin Mary allowed herself to make was concerning the logical impossibility of such an event to take place “**How can this be, since I do not know a man**” (Luke 1:34). The angel’s answer to her question, if submitted to human logic and analysis, would not be much of a help to anyone who is not anchored in faith. Yet St. Mary was totally, obediently receptive. Again, she received the Prophetic Word from Simon the Elder concerning her anguish for her son’s agony with receptivity and obedience “yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also” (Luke 2:35). That is why she had been rewarded with the Prophetic Word that she will be honored by all generations “henceforth all generations will call me blessed” (Luke 1:48).

+Readiness

The Mother of God is an emblem of genuine humility in genuine service. Any other woman, having known, who she was about to become because of Who she was carrying in her womb, would have sat and rightfully expected myriads of angels to come and serve her. Instead, we see St. Mary had forgotten herself and got concerned about Elizabeth, her relative who was great with a child in her sixth month. She hurried to visit her and stayed almost three months there, only to disappear before the other women came; thus escaping mention; “and Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house” (Luke 1:56). St. Mary’s readiness got the hundred fold reward. For before she had time to announce the glory that had been bestowed on her, the baby in Elizabeth’s womb declared it bowing down in honor and worship to the King of Kings that she was carrying.

May the prayers and supplications of St. Mary, the Mother of our God be with us all. Amen.

St George Services

Sunday

Early Liturgy	6:30-8:30am
English Liturgy	8:00-11:00am
Arabic Liturgy	8:30-11:30am
Sunday School	11:00-12:30pm
Servants Meeting	12:50-1:30pm

Tuesday

Liturgy	5:00-7:00am
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Wednesday

Liturgy	9:00-11:30pm
Prayer Meeting	7:00-8:00pm

Friday

Liturgy	9:00-11:30pm
Teens Meeting	7:30-9:00pm
Youth Meeting	8:30-10:00pm

* *Ladies Meeting on the first Friday of every month at 7pm*

Saturday

English Liturgy	8:00-10:30am
Vespers	7:00-8:30pm
English Vespers	7:00-8:00pm
Midnight Praises	8:30-10:30pm

(Confession: Wed, Fri and Sat nights by appointment)

St George Accounts

General Account

(Receipts issued from this account **are not** tax deductible)

Account Name: St George
Coptic Orthodox Church
BSB: 062199

Account Number: 0090 3651

Building Fund Account

(Receipts issued from this account **are** tax deductible)

Account Name: St George
School Building Fund
BSB: 062199

Account Number: 1008 7359

May our Lord accept your donations bless your lives and everything you do.

Did you know? Feasts of Saint Mary

The Annunciation of the Birth of Saint Mary	7 Misra (August 13th)
The Birth of Saint Mary	1 Bashans (May 9th)
The Entrance of Saint Mary into the Temple at Jerusalem	3 Kiahk (December 13)
The Dormition of Saint Mary, the Theotokos	21 Tubah (January 29th)
The Assumption of the Body of Saint Mary	16 Misra (August 22)
The Commemoration of 1 st Church for the St Mary in Philippi	21 Baounah (June 28th)
The Apparition of Saint Mary in the Church of Zeitoun (Cairo)	24 Baramhat (April 2)