

St. Mary- Theotokos - Virgin Mary - Mother of God

Hail Mary! The Holy Virgin, Mother of God

by Very Rev. Joseph Pukkunnel Corepiscopos
Invited Paper

[Editor's Note: *Very Rev. Joseph Pukkunnel Corepiscopos is one of the senior priests in Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church. He is leading a 'retired but not tired' life at his house by helping our Sunday school and Seminary students at Udayagiri by doing a lot of translation work required for their study materials. Joseph achen has a masters degree in English Literature and is a retired teacher of Basil School Kothamangalam. He served many churches as vicar in Angamali diocese and outer kerala .*

We are thankful to achen for responding to our request for an article at a very short notice. The article has been transcribed from handwritten text. There may be few errors and achen did not yet get an opportunity to inspect the final copy due to the deadline for publishing the special edition. We will correct any errors in the web edition.

We need scholars like Joseph achen to come forward and write such quality articles that will become reference materials for future students of our faith.]

St. Mary is the Holy Virgin Mother of God. The name 'Virgin Mother' will seem to be paradoxical; but only one who has studied the mysterious way how St. Mary bore the infant Jesus in her womb can understand how she had conceived even yet a virgin.

Mary was born to Joachim and Ann (Hannah), very old and saintly persons. Child Mary was born after ardent prayers and faith during their old age. The child, after the suckling period was over, was submitted to the temple in keeping with their oath to God Jehovah. The child grew up in the temple with holy people in prayer and meditation. She did not know what sin was. As she grew up, she was betrothed to an old saintly, Just man, named Joseph. It was at such a time that the angel appeared before her and announced about her child-bearing. The angel came unto her and said, " Hail Mary, thou art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women."

Mary was bewildered and wondered what sort of salutation it was. The angel continued:

"Fear not Mary, for thou hast found favor of God. And, behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shalt be great and shall be called the son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and his kingdom there shall be no end."

Mary was puzzled at this announcement. She took courage and said unto the angel, "*How shalt this be, seeing I know not a man?*"

The angel answered and said unto her:

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, and therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God." --- "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

And Mary said, "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."*

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38 (KJV)

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called [a] the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.

Footnotes:

a. Luke 1:35 Or So the child to be born will be called holy,

Luke 1:26-38 - Today's New International Version (TNIV)

This annunciation was too great for an ordinary person to comply with. But Mary did it. She believed it fully and prepared herself to face the after-effects of such a thing. 'A woman espoused to a man was to live with him for an year without coming together (physical intimacy)' was the prevalent Jewish law before the marriage proper. During this period, if one is found conceived, she was to be stoned to death, a ridiculous and ignominious death, according to the Jewish law. Mary was fully aware of this fact. Yet, she was ready to face any catastrophes in this connection lest she should violate her acceptance of the 'word' of the angel. This shows really a sign of her extreme faith in the Lord and she fully believed that the Lord of the Highest would safeguard her.

The miracle in the annunciation is wonderful and mysterious. Mary heard the 'words' of the angel that she would be conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost and the power of the Highest would be on her. The 'word' hearing through her ears

went into her womb and the word became flesh, and from there taking flesh and blood from her until she brought forth her child 'Jesus.'

Her husband was a 'Just' old man who was very much troubled at the knowledge of his betrothed wife's untimely pregnancy. Being just and very sympathetic, he wished to abandon her without the knowledge of anyone else at all. But God was kind enough to make him understand that his betrothed spouse was not polluted and that she was conceived by the Holy Ghost. Joseph wanted to abandon her with a view to keeping her away from the ignominy of bearing a child unlawfully.

These were predestined. In the Holy Bible, in the book of Proverbs Chapter 8: verses 23 to 28 refer to St. Mary according to Catholic Church teaching.

23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.
24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:
26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.
27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:
28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:
Proverbs 8:23-28 (KJV)

In the prophecy of Isaiah Chapter 7 verse 14:

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14 (KJV)

The annunciation of the angel at Nazareth to Mariam is just a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah. It is interesting to see Simeon, the old man in the temple of Jerusalem (St. Luke 2: 21-35).

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;
23 (As it is written in the law of the LORD, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)
24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.
26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,
28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Luke 2:15-35 (KJV)

Simeon was a good scribe. At that time, since printing was not begun, he was copying the prophecy of Isaiah on leather scroll or papyrus as was the custom. When he began to copy verses of chapter 7 of Isaiah, he stopped scribing at verse 14. He began to think of the credibility of the idea of the verses which followed. He was doubtful and thought a virgin would not conceive. Holy Ghost revealed to him that he will not see death before he had seen the Lord Christ, son of a virgin. By spirit, he came to know the coming of the child Jesus.

It was customary to bring new born children to the temple and Simeon thought of seeing the 'child of the virgin.' Years elapsed and he still waited and no death came to him. Long, long years passed and finally one day, he saw a divine child brought to the temple by a couple. They were, of course, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Simeon could easily know that it was the child he was awaiting for so long. Simeon took child Jesus in his arms and prayed, "Lord, now lettest (let) thou thy servant depart in peace. According to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles." St. Luke 2:29-32

29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;

30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation

31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,

And the glory of Your people Israel."

Luke 2:29-32 (NKJV)

These credible facts will enable anyone to understand the veracity of the mysterious annunciation of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of the World. Mary was dubious in the naturalness of the fact; but she got it clarified then and there. The angel said that it was because of the power of the Highest and further elucidated it with the example of Elizabeth, the barren woman, wife of the Priest Zachariah living in the hill sides of Judea. They were close relatives of Mary. The angel reported that Elizabeth was pregnant with a child conceived 6 months ago.

Virgin Mary was pure, chaste, and humble where the Highest could come down and live. Thus the 'word' became flesh and Jesus was born in a manger at Bethlehem showing how much our Lord and Savior loved humbleness. The epistle of St. Paul to Philippians chapter 2:6-8 states as follows:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:6-8 (KJV)

St. Mary, the purest and humblest, was selected to take flesh and blood for the 'word' to incarnate in the form of a man to suffer to the maximum extent bearing the entire sins of the whole humanity and relieving the human kind to eternal bliss and salvation. The human heritage of servitude and agony by the disobedience of Adam and the resultant shackles put on by Satan on the humanity, was thus broken off and demolished by the glorious and victorious death of our Lord and Savior on the cross. A death on the cross between two robbers may seem to be the most ridiculous and ignominious; but such a glorious death has never happened and never will happen in future.

Herein we see the greatness of Holy Virgin Mother. How great and blessed and honored St. Mary becomes when she could give her flesh and blood to the incarnated God for the fulfillment of the plan of redemption of humanity by his incarnation. Praise be her name for ever and ever.

Regarding her faith, it is par excellence. St. Mary felt the words of the angel during the annunciation were quite unnatural and even thought of it as some sort of temptation as Eve had faced at the Garden of Eden and hence could not find reason to believe it. But when the angel explained the miracle of conception of barren Elizabeth, her relative, and wife of priest Zachariah, especially in such a ripe old age, she believed in the supernatural power of the Highest. Then she said that she was the handmaid of the Highest and 'Let His will be done.' These words very emphatically express her deep and ardent faith in the Highest.

At the wedding of Cana of Galilee, Jesus did his first miracle. Mary and Jesus, with all his disciples, were invited to the wedding. While the feast was in full swing, it was found that the wine in the store was insufficient to meet the demand. The host was in a very difficult situation. He was perplexed and worried. St. Mary happened to note the situation. She went to Jesus, her son, and reported that they have no wine and they are in dire need of wine. Jesus said unto her: "What have I to do with thee. mine hour is not yet to come." This simply means, 'we are just invited people (guests) and we are not at all to be bothered with how things are going on in the feast.' Of course, the important item in the Jewish marriage is the wine and that is what was in short supply. Mary felt sympathy for the worried host and hence she appealed to her son for assistance. She believed that her son was capable of assisting the poor troubled man (host).

The words of reply by Jesus, as we know, was not a positive one. But St. Mary was not discouraged. She returned to her place calmly. On her way back, she met some servants of the house. She told those servants, "whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

See what happened next. Jesus asked the servants to fill the jars, six in number each containing about two or three firkins (20-30 gallons) each. The servants filled the stone jars upto the brim with water. Then he told them, "Draw out now and bear unto the governor of the feast and they bear it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water, that was transformed into wine, [he did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew)], the master of the feast called the bridegroom aside and he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" Jesus had turned the water into the best wine.

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. 3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it. 9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water

John 2: Jesus Changes Water Into Wine

1 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

4 "Woman, [a] why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.[b]

7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests

knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. 10 And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

John 2:1-11 (NKJV)

have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples put their faith in him.

Footnotes:

a. John 2:4 The Greek for Woman does not denote any disrespect.

b. John 2:6 Or from about 75 to about 115 liters

John 2: 1-11 [Today's New International Version (TNIV)]

The miracle at Cana propounds certain very important facts.

1. This shows that Jesus is the incarnated God, exhibiting himself as true man and true creator.
2. The intercession of his mother was fully complied with despite his time had not come.
3. The immense value of St. Mary's intervention (intercession) is explicitly explained. Some sections of Christian community simply discards the intercession of St. Mary and other saints saying that there is only one person to intercede and that is directly to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. St. Mary sees the awkward situation of the host of the marriage at Cana and, even without his plea, St. Mary intercedes for the wretched man and even though his time has not come, our Lord complies fully with her request.

St. James, in his epistle, clearly says in chapter 5:16: "*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*" James 5:16 (KJV)

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. James 5:16 (TNIV)

If the prayer of a righteous man is so valuable, then how much more will be that of the mother of God, St. Mary, and that of several saints and martyrs of the Lord?

St. Mary, the mother of God, is at par excellence in purity, humbleness, simplicity, and gracefulness and all such good qualities of a human being can reach and she is the queen of the heaven, earth, and the universe.

HAIL MARY, PRAY FOR ALL OF US. AD MAJORIM DEI GLORIAM

Oh ... Morth Mariam Yoldath Aloho (Mother of God) Pray for us.

See Also:

[St. Mary, Mother of God \(B. C. 14? - A. D. 66?\)](#) by Rev. Fr. Dr. Mani Rajan Corepiscopo

All Christians accept St. Mary as a model to emulate. The early Church at Jerusalem had a close association with St. Mary. Protestant theologians content that Mary was a passive instrument in the salvific act of Jesus Christ. However, St. Mary was not timidly submissive for she had the free will to choose. This is evident from her response: 'Let it be to me according to your word' (Luke 1:38).

[Virgin Mary - In the Syrian Orthodox Faith](#) by Rev. Fr. Thomas Kora

In the plan and process of human salvation even God himself was utilizing the will and co-operation of this poor and humble Virgin. This Ever Virgin Mariyam's (Second Eve's) obedience and submission to God's will, caused to wipe out and cleanse the sin and disgrace which entered in the world through the first Eve.

[The Holy Virgin Mary in the Syrian Orthodox Church by His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas](#)

[St. Mary Mother of God Malankara World Supplement Home](#)

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