

St. Mary in the Coptic Church



Mary's story

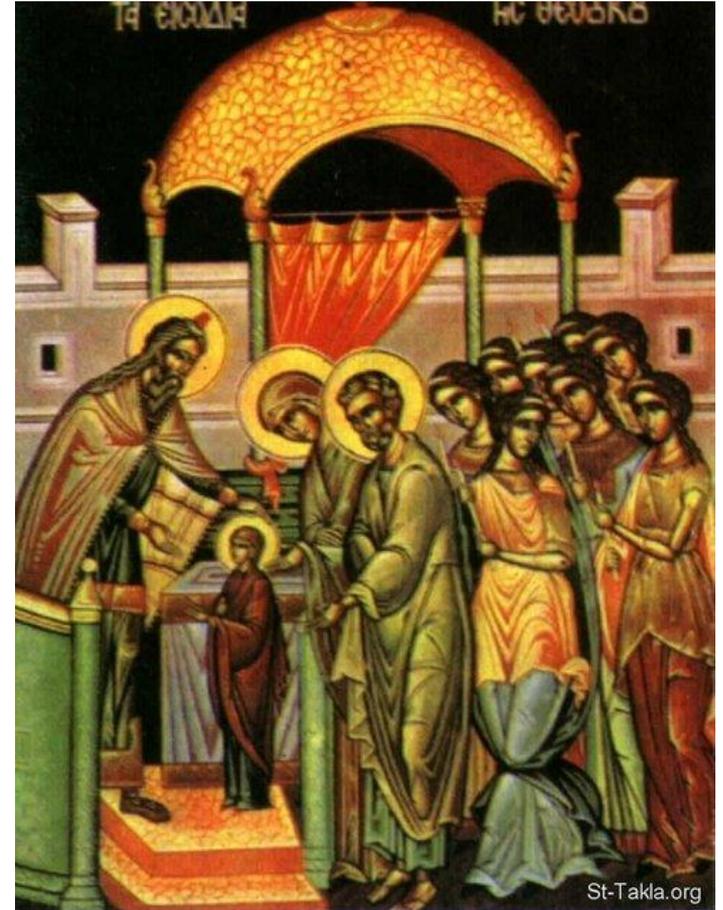
- Parents : Joachim and Anne. They were righteous people in front of God. They prayed earnestly asking God to grant them a child. Six years after they were married, they had Mary, and they knew that she was a special gift from God. They gave her the name "MARY" which means "Royal Incense" because she would become a special offering to God.



St. Mary's birth to her parents Joachim and Anne

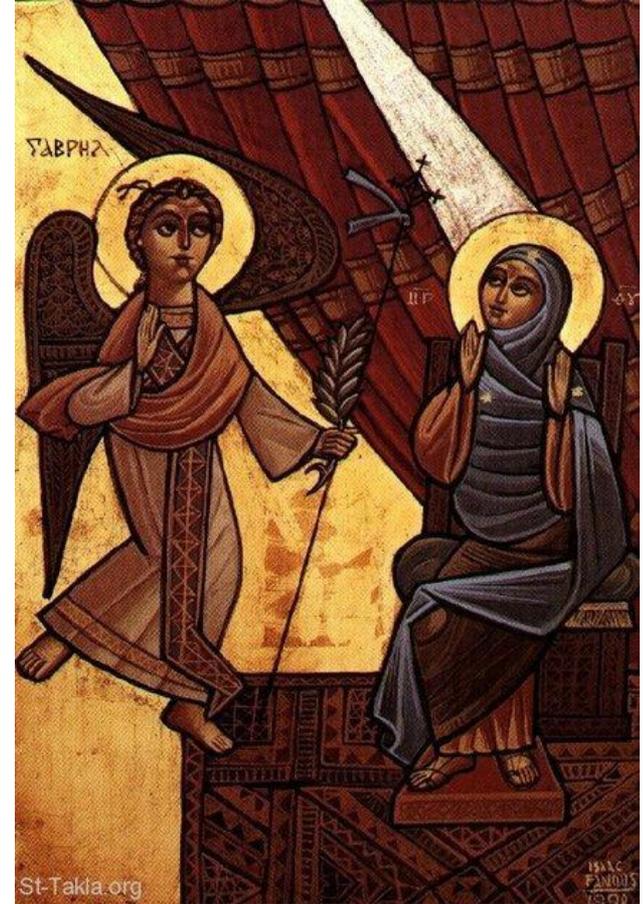
In the Temple

- Mary: at the age of three, was taken to the temple to serve God as promised by her parents.
- In the Temple, lived for 9 years then had to be cared for outside the temple.
- The canes of her male relatives collected for God's choice, Joseph's cane budded.



Submission

- Archangel Gabriel announce to her the good news, Mary was chosen to give birth to the saviour of the world. (Luke 1:35)
- Humble Mary submits to the will of God.(Luke 1:38)



Young and Humble Mary

Mary visits Elizabeth.(Luke 1:39-45)

³⁹ Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfilment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”



In the manger

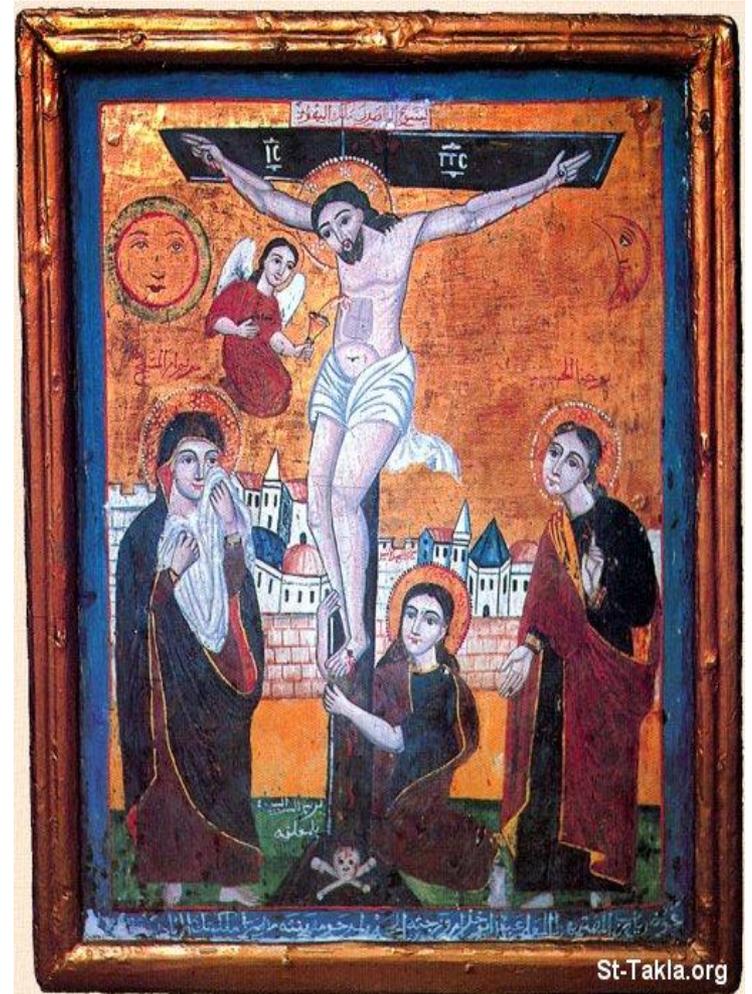
- Archangel Gabriel appears to Joseph(Mt 1:18-21)
- Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem.
- Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:7)
- Joseph had children from his first marriage: Judah, Simon, James (the Lesser) and Josses (Matthew 13:55), whom the Gospels refer to as "brethren" of Jesus.
- The shepherds. (Luke 2:8-18)
- Herod.
- Going to Egypt(Mt 2:13,14)



Mary continuing life of submission

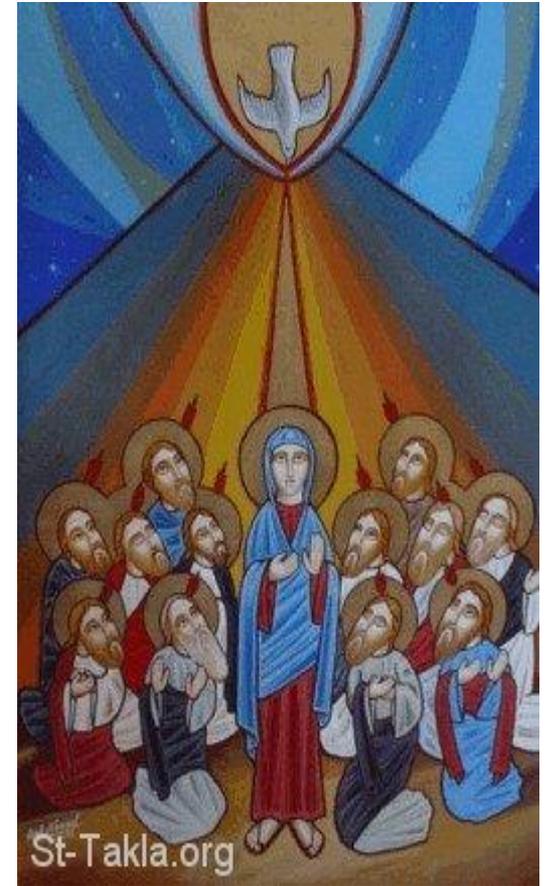
- At the cross Jesus asked John to care for St. Mary

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*. (John 19:26,27)



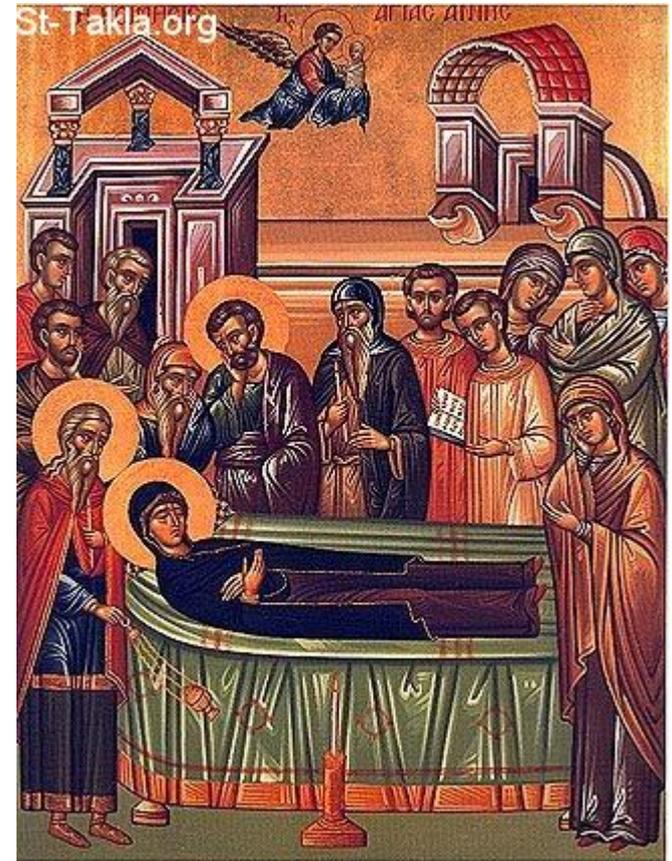
St. Mary was present on Pentecost

- ¹⁴These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, ^[b] with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. (Acts 1:14)
- ¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord ^[a] in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. (Acts 2:1-3)



St. Mary's Departure

- Once, as the Holy Virgin prayed on the Mount of Olives (near Jerusalem), the Angel Gabriel appeared to Her, as he had the first time in Nazareth, holding in his hand a branch with a white flower from Paradise, and announced to Her that in three days Her earthly life would come to an end and that the Lord would take Her to Him. The Lord arranged it so that toward that time the Apostles congregated in Jerusalem from the many parts of the world where they were preaching. At the hour of Her end, a bright light illuminated the room in which the Virgin Mary was lying. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, surrounded by Angels, appeared and received Her most pure soul. The Apostles buried Her holy body, according to Her wish, at the foot of the Mount of Olives in the Garden of Gethsemane, in the cave where reposed the bodies of her parents and of the righteous Joseph.



St. Mary's body taken to heaven

- St. Thomas was absent at the time of St. Mary's departure, but he came after the burial. On his way back to Jerusalem, St. Thomas saw angels carrying St. Mary's pure body and ascending with it to heaven, and one of the angels said to him, "Hurry and kiss the pure body of St. Mary." When he arrived to the disciples, they informed him about St. Mary's departure. He told them, "I will not believe, unless I see her body, as you all know how I did doubt the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ before." They took him to the tomb, to uncover the body but they did not find it, and they were perplexed and amazed. St. Thomas told them how he saw the pure body ascending to heaven, carried by angels. (Coptic Synaxarium)



St. Mary's fasting

- The Holy Spirit then told them, "The Lord did not Will to leave Her Holy body on earth." The Lord had promised his pure apostles that they would see her in flesh another time. They were waiting for the fulfilment of this truthful promise, until the sixteenth day of the month of Misra, when the promise of seeing her was fulfilled. They saw her sitting on the right hand of her Son and her Lord, surrounded by the angelic Host, as David prophesied and said, "At your right hand stands the queen." (Psalm 45:9) This is the feast of St. Mary that we celebrate in August every year after her fast.

- St. Mary's life on earth was sixty years. She spent twelve years of them in the temple, thirty years in the house of the righteous St. Joseph, and fourteen years in the care of St. John the Evangelist, as the Lord commanded her saying, "Woman behold your Son," and to St. John, "Behold your Mother."



Theotokos

- No other personality from the New or the Old Testament has been glorified like St. Mary. She has been raised in status above the Cherubim and the Seraphim, for she has said through the Holy Spirits, "...behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name." (Lk 1:48-49)



St. Mary's feasts

- Each saint in the Church has one feast, usually commemorating departure or martyrdom. Some saints have an additional feast marking the finding of relics, a certain miracle to which that saint is given credit or the consecration of a church in his or her name. The Virgin Saint Mary, on the other hand, has many feasts:
- 1) [7 Messori \(August\) - Annunciation of the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Joachim.](#)
- 2) [1 Pachons \(May\) - The birth of St. Mary.](#)
- 3) [3 Koiahk \(December\) - The Entry of the most Holy Theotokos into the temple at Jerusalem.](#)
- 4) [24 Pachons \(June\) - The arrival of the Holy Family in Egypt.](#)



St. Mary's Feasts

- 5) [21 Tobi \(January\) - The falling asleep of our Lady, the Theotokos, St. Mary.](#)
- 6) [16 Messori \(August\) - Commemoration of the Assumption of the Theotokos.](#)
- 7) [21 Paoni \(June\) - Dedication of the first Church for the All-Holy and blessed Virgin Mary in the city of Ephesus.](#)
- 8) [24 Paremhat \(April\) -The apparition of the Theotokos in Zeitoun.](#)
- 9) 21st of each Coptic Month - Commemoration of the Theotokos's passing away in 21 Toba.

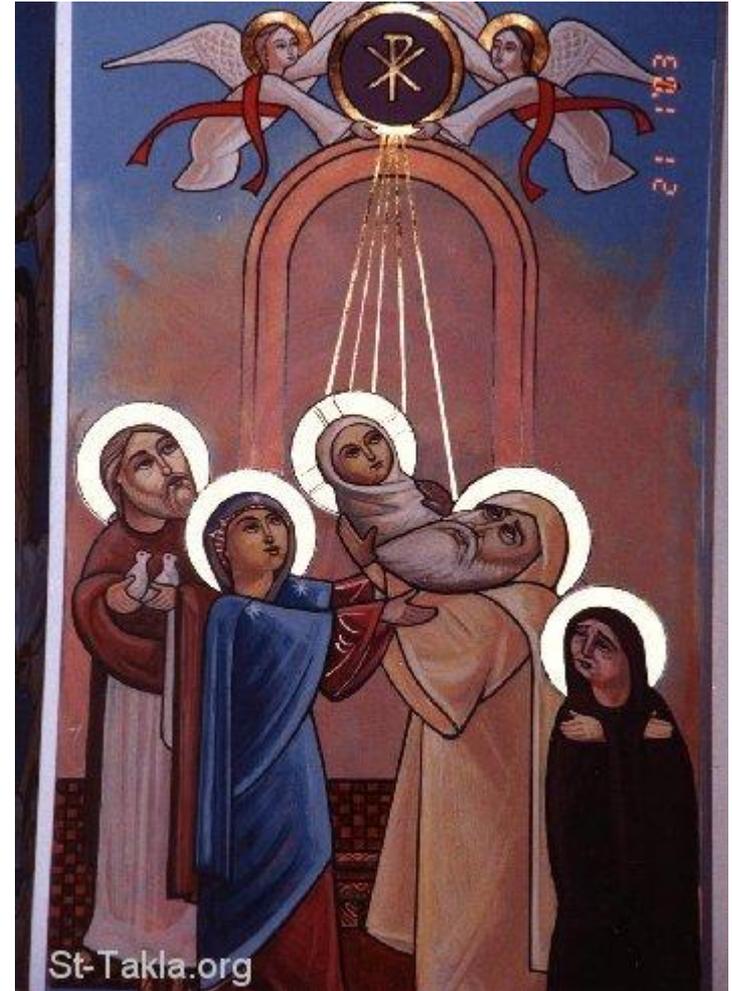


Miracles

A LIFE SURROUNDED BY MIRACLES

In the life of The Virgin, miracles begin before her birth, and continue after her death. From these:

1. She was generated with a miracle, from sterile parents, with an annunciation from the angel.
2. The miracle of her betrothal, in a divine manner which determined who will take her and care for her.
3. The miracle of her conception of Christ while she is a virgin, and the continuation of her virginity after giving birth.



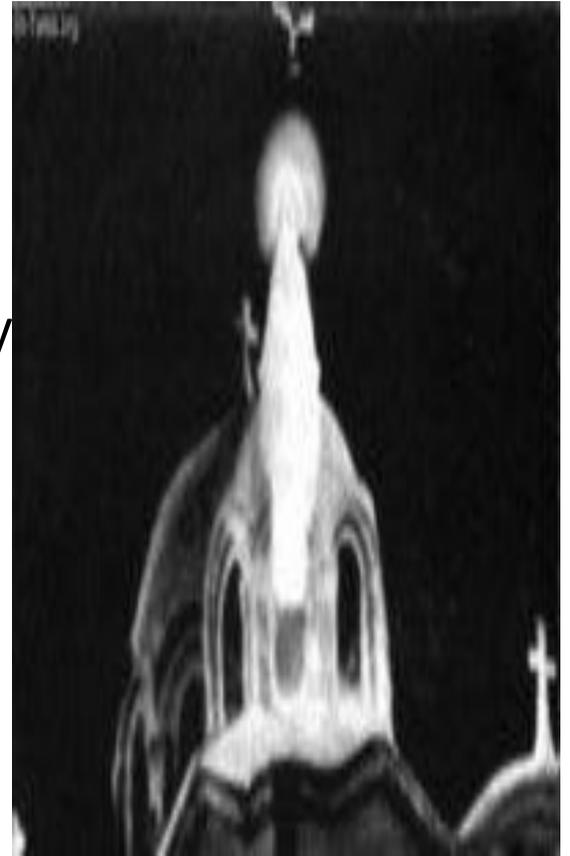
Miracles

4. The miracle during her visit to Elizabeth who, when she heard the voice of her greeting, the babe leaped for joy in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit.
5. Innumerable miracles during her visit to Egypt, one of which is the fall of idols (Is. 19:1).
6. The first miracle which the Lord did in Cana of Galilee, happened through her request.
7. The miracle of the dissolution of iron, and the deliverance of the apostle Matthias, happened through her intervention.
8. The miracle of Christ receiving her soul, at the hour of her death



Miracles

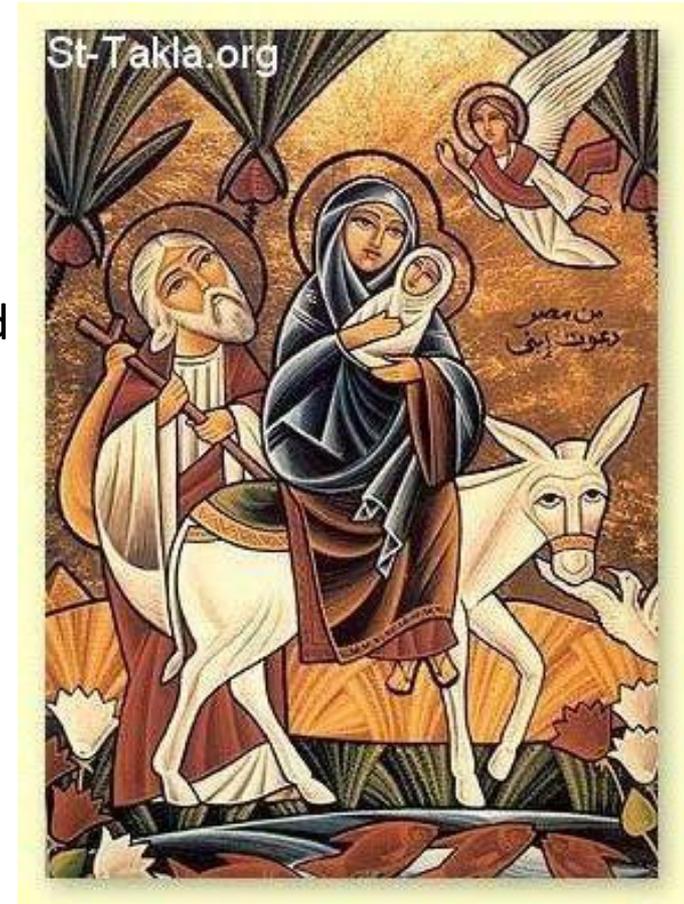
9. The miracle of the striking of the Jews by the Lord, when they wanted to attack her corpse after her death.
10. The miracle of the ascent of her body to heaven.
11. The miracles which happened everywhere by her hands, about which books were written.
12. Her apparition in numerous places, and especially her wonderful apparition in our churches in Zeitoun, and in Papadopoulo. Miracles are still happening everywhere, and will happen as a testimony to the honour of this saint.



Copts care for the fast of St. Mary

What then is the secret behind this care?

- First: The love of Copts for The Virgin who had visited and blessed their country, and left her traces in numerous places where churches have been built.
- Second: The multiple miracles which happened in Egypt through the intercession of our Lady The Virgin, made many people eager to build churches dedicated to her name.
- The apparition of The Virgin in her church at Zeitoun, and the many miracles that accompanied this apparition, have certainly increased the affection of the Copts for The Virgin, and for the fast which bears her name.



St. Mary in the Coptic Church

THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY IN THE CHURCH'S FAITH

The Orthodox Coptic Church honours our Lady The Virgin with due honour without exaggeration, and without lessening of her position.

1. She is, the mother of God,

(Theotokos This is a Greek word composed of two syllables: 'Theo' meaning 'God', and 'tokos' meaning 'bearer'; that is, 'she who bore God in her womb'), and not the mother of "Jesus" as the Nestorians had claimed.

2. The Church believes that the Holy Spirit has sanctified the depository of The Virgin during the pregnancy with Christ.

That was according to what the angel said to her "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

St. Mary in the Coptic Church

3. The Church believes in the intercession of The Virgin.

The church places her intercession before the intercession of angels and archangels, because she is the mother of God, and she is the Queen who is at the right hand of the King.

4. The Holy Bible gives to The Virgin the name "filled with grace".

"highly favoured one".....All human beings are highly favoured, but The Virgin is filled with grace..... although grace does not mean infallibility.



St. Mary in the coptic church

- ***5. The Church believes in the persistence of the virginity of The Virgin.***

The only exception to this rule, are our brothers the Protestants, who claim that The Virgin gave birth to sons after Christ.

- ***6. The Church believes in the Ascent of the body of The Virgin to heaven, and celebrates that feast on the 16th of Misra.***



The Titles of the Holy Virgin Saint Mary

- **1. The 'Theotokos'**

This is a Greek word composed of two syllables: 'Theo' meaning 'God', and 'tokos' meaning 'bearer'; that is, 'she who bore God in her womb'.



The Titles of the Holy Virgin Saint Mary

- **2. The 'Second Heaven'**

According to Acts 7:49, "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool", God dwells in heaven, and therefore we call St. Mary the 'second heaven' because God descended and dwelt within her.

The Titles of the Holy Virgin Saint Mary

- **3. The 'Golden lamp stand' and the 'Mother of True Light'**

St. Mary carried our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the True Light of the world (Jn 8:12), and for this reason, we give her this title. In the introduction to the Creed, we also say 'We exalt you the Mother of the true Light...'

- **4. The 'Golden Censor'**

St. Mary carried bore our Lord Jesus Christ, the 'Sweet Aroma'. On another point, the union, within the censor, of charcoal and fire, symbolizes the unity between the Divinity and Humanity of our Lord, and thus we call her the 'golden censor' because she carried the incarnate God in her womb.

The Titles of the Holy Virgin Saint Mary

- **5. The 'Burning Bush'**

Moses saw a burning bush that was not consumed, "And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed" (Ex 3:2).

- **6. 'Aaron's Rod'**

This rod sprouted, put forth buds, produced blossoms, and yielded ripe almonds, without being planted nor watered (Num 17:1-11), and for this reason, it is a symbol of St. Mary, who being virgin, gave birth to God the logos.

The Titles of the Holy Virgin Saint Mary

7. The 'Ever-Virgin'

In the fraction of advent, the priest says 'She being virgin, gave birth to Him, and her virginity is sealed.' " . Also in the prophecies(Ez 44:1-2).

- **8. 'Jacob's Ladder'**

"Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."
(Gn 28:12) This Ladder is a symbol of St. Mary because our Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven to earth by taking flesh through her, and thus she was the junction between heaven and earth

The Titles of the Holy Virgin Saint Mary

9. The 'Manna Pot'

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the 'True Manna' Who descended from heaven and gave life to the world- "This is the bread which came down from heaven-not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats his bread will live forever." (Jn 6:58). Thus St. Mary is the 'golden pot' who carried the 'True Manna' in her womb (Ex 16:32-33).

- **10. The 'Ark of the Covenant'**

"...and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat." (Heb 9:3-5) This Ark was overlaid on all sides with gold, and this is a symbol of St. Mary's purity that is like the pure gold. It contained the manna, which is a symbol of Jesus Christ, the 'Living Bread'

Coptic Church honours St. Mary

- In obedience to God's clear intention, our Church honours St. Mary through icons, hymns, and special feast days. We entreat her as the human being who was most intimate to Christ on earth, to intercede with her Son on our behalf. We ask her, as the first believer and the mother of the Church, for guidance and protection. We venerate her, but do not worship her. For worship belongs to God alone. We remember her in all of our prayers (Mass & Tasbeha), which gives her an unique place in our church. We still remember her miracles and her awesome apparel in our churches.

Spiritual benefit

- The main honour for St. Mary in our hearts is following her simple submissive faith, trusting God and obeying him.
- Benefit from St. Mary's intercession for us with her beloved son and saviour Jesus Christ.