



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON, THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD, AMEN.

The Life of The Blessed Virgin St Mary

The Virgin Mary through the prophecies of the Holy Bible

1. *The Seed Of The Women*

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

2. *The Virgin Shall Conceive*

Isa 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

3. *The Closed Gate*

Ezek 44:1 Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut. 2 And the LORD said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.

4. *A Fountain Sealed*

Song 4:12 A garden enclosed *Is* my sister, *my* spouse, A spring shut up, A fountain sealed.

5. *The Burning Bush*

Exo 3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 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 was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." 4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

6. *Jacob's Ladder*

Gen 28:12 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.

7. *The Ark Of The Covenant*

Heb 9:3 and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4 which had the golden censer 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; 5 and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

8. *Water From The Rock*

Exo 17:1 Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was* no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?" 3 And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why *is* it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" 4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!" 5 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your

rod with which you struck the river, and go. 6 "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

9. The Ram Caught In The Bush

Gen 22:13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him* was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

10. The Rod Of Aaron

Num 17:8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds.

11. The Sling Of David

1 Sam 17:50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But *there* was no sword in the hand of David.

The Genealogy of the Virgin St Mary

St. Mary the virgin is related to the tribe of Judah and descendant of David.

Elizabeth the mother of St. John the Baptist is called in the Holy Gospel the Virgin's relative. ***"Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. (Luke 1:36).*** It is said that she is her maternal aunt.

Salome, Zebedee's wife, the mother of James and John is also a relative of the Virgin Mary. ***Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (John 19:25).***

The Virgin Mary and Joseph are from the same tribe. Therefore the Virgin Mary is a descendant of priests, kings and prophets and she is the daughter of David. Hence the angel said when he announced to her the divine conception:

Luke 1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

THE BARRENS JOACHIM AND ANNA PARENTS OF THE VIRGIN MARY

- ❖ The ecclesiastical tradition supported by the apostolic teachings states, that the parents of the Virgin Mary are Joachim and Anna.
- ❖ Anna's father is the priest Matthan of the Levi's tribe and Aaron's house.
- ❖ her mother is Mary from the tribe of Judah.
- ❖ Both Joachim and Anna lived in a village close to Nazareth in Galilee.
- ❖ They were wealthy, distributing their profits to the temple and to the poor and with the rest were covering their own necessities.
- ❖ The Virgin is the daughter of barrens, like Isaac, Samuel and John the Baptist. Both were barren, and righteous in the sight of God, walking according to his divine commandments.
- ❖ To the Jews, sterility was considered as a curse from God and disgrace before men, because every Jewish virgin had the ambition and was praying to be worthy to give birth to Christ-the expected Messiah.
- ❖ Joachim and Anna were constantly praying and asking God to remove the disgrace from their house, but they reached the old age and yet their supplication was not answered.
- ❖ It is narrated that Joachim once went to the Lord's temple to present an offering, but the priest refused it, because the offerer was barren.
- ❖ Joachim returned home grieved, broken-hearted and humiliated. He and his wife Anna frequently cried before God who granted their request and blessed them with a daughter and they named her Mariam (Mary).
- ❖ It is a Syriac name compound of (Mour) and (Yam) which means, see of myrrh (used for perfumes, incense, and burials. According to others Mariam means, sea star, and also means, light.

THE CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN MARY

The Virgin Mary was conceived according to the natural law. Like all other men she inherited from her parents, the sin of our first parents Adam and Eve, which is called the original or ancestral sin. **Rom 5:12** *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.* And David said: **Psa 51:5** *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.* Therefore, like all men, the Virgin was born under the influence of sin. She was born in Nazareth.

THE VIRGIN IN THE TEMPLE

When the Virgin reached three years of age, her parents fulfilled their vow and presented her to the temple. During her stay in the temple they died without knowing anything about her future. There is another opinion of the fathers mentioned in the ecclesiastical rite. In the mooning prayer of Friday, in the book of Common Prayer we read: "Mary was orphaned of father and mother, and as Moses commanded, the priests took her and brought her up; her parents left her, when they died, in the house of God and the Lord of the prophets descended and blessed and hallowed her, Hallelujah, may her prayer be to us a stronghold and house of refuge". In both opinions, the Virgin was brought up in the temple since her tender age. She was dedicated only to God, worshipping Him and serving in His temple, together with the elderly and worshipping women. like the prophetess Anna the daughter of Phanuel who "never left the temple" (Lk.2:37). The Virgin was studying the books of the divine revelation and keeping the law.

The Virgin's vow does not mean that she vowed her virginity for all the days of her life. The girls to vow their virginity for ever was not accustomed among the Jews, because every Jewish girl was longing to give birth to the Messiah, thence was patiently looking for the day of her nuptial feast. It was against the religious tradition of the Jews and the teachings of the Pentateuch, which considers the precept of marriage an important one, to fulfil God's commandment "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28). Some prophets, like Elijah and John the Baptist and others had kept the virginity, but that was for a divine purpose and they were considered as abnormal, and the abnormal is anomalous.

THE VIRGIN'S BETROTHAL TO JOSEPH THE JUST:

When Mary reached 14 years of age and because she was an orphan, the priests were her guardians. According to the custom of those days they called her closest relatives and drew lots which fell to the righteous Joseph who became the virgin Mary's betrothed. Some of the fathers proposed that Joseph was a widower and had from his late wife children, who were later called the Lord's brothers. While others say, that he was a virgin. From the course of events we are certain that he was extremely poor practising the basic carpentry in Nazareth.

THE ANNUNCIATION

Luke 1:26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favoured *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!" 29 But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." 34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" 35 And the angel answered and 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 1:36 "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 "For with God nothing will be impossible." 38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

THE VIRGIN ST MARY VISITS HER RELATIVE ELIZABETH

Luke 1:36 "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

Luke 1:39 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." 46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. 48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. 49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy *is* His name. 50 And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him From generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones, And exalted *the* lowly. 53 He has filled *the* hungry with good things, And *the* rich He has sent away empty. 54 He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of *His* mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever." 56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

JOSEPH'S DOUBT AND ASSURANCE

Mat 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." 24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

THE EVER-VIRGIN

She is the virgin the Mother of God, whose virginity is perpetual, she is the first among the first-borns, the virgin of virgins who gave birth to the Incarnate God and she is virgin, before on and after birth, as we mentioned before. Concerning the verse "He did not know her till she had brought forth her first-born Son" (Matt. 1:25). St. Matthew wrote it to confirm that Mary was Virgin before she gave birth to the Lord Jesus and at the time of giving birth she remained virgin, and that she conceived her Son of the Holy Spirit, not of man's seed. St. Matthew did not speak about Mary's state after she had brought forth the Lord. The negation, that Joseph did not know the Virgin before she gave birth to Jesus, does not mean that he knew her after birth. The utterance (till), is not always used as to indicate the passing sentence of what comes before it on that which follows it, this is understood from what being used in different places in the Holy Bible, it says: **(2 Sam 6:23) Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.** Therefore, who will draw a conclusion that she brought forth children after her death? Also **Gen 28:15 "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."**

The essence is that Joseph did not know her at all and she is Ever-Virgin.

THE FIRST-BORN SON:

Mat 1:24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS. it does not mean that the Virgin brought forth other children after Jesus and consequently not Ever-Virgin.

THE LORD'S BROTHERS

those who are called the Lord's brothers in the Holy Gospel (Matt. 13:15) are his relatives, namely his cousins. The divine revelation calls relatives and members of the same tribe, brothers (Gen.31:37, Exo.2:11). This is why Abraham called his nephew Lot, brother.

THE MOTHER OF GOD

- ❖ The Holy Church called the Virgin Mary, (Mother of God) as we have mentioned, because she gave birth to the incarnate God.
- ❖ But Nestorius patriarch of Constantinople in the 5th century, disapproved that this noble name be given to the Virgin.

- ❖ The third ecumenical council of Ephesus in the year 431 in which 200 bishops assembled and condemned Nestorius and maintained that Christ after the union is one person and one nature without confusion or mixture or change.
- ❖ Then, they compiled the introduction of the creed to confirm that Saint Mary is the Mother of God, said: "We magnify you, O Mother of the true light and we praise you, O holy virgin Mother Of God, because you gave birth to the Saviour of all the world".

HER HUMILITY – “in her heart”

Luke 2:15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." **16** And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. **17** Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. **18** And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. **19** But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Luke 2:48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." **49** And He said to them, "**Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?**" **50** But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. **51** Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. **52** And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

INTERCEDING AT THE WEDDING OF CANA

John 2:1 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."

THE PAIN OF THE CROSS

Luke 2:34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against **35** "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

DELIVERED TO ST JOHN THE BELOVED AT THE CROSS

John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. **26** 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*.

AT PENTECOST

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN INTO HEAVEN:

The Virgin was longing to depart into heaven to be with her Son Jesus. She peacefully slept in the Lord. The historians did not agree on the year of her dormition nor on her age. It is most likely, that she ascended into heaven in the year (56 AD.) on her seventy years of age. The subject of her assumption into heaven in soul and body, the Syrian Church does not confess it as a dogma of belief, but it is a patristic and believing tradition. With this tradition we rely on the Syriac story of St. Thomas the Apostle in which we read about the apostles being caught away by the Spirit to assemble in Jerusalem for the burial of the Virgin Mary. St. Thomas was late, on his arrival found her ascending into heaven and received her girdle which he brought to the Apostles, asking them to open the tomb. When they opened it, they found that her holy body was not there. Then St. Thomas declared to them that fact of her assumption into heaven in the glorified body and that he witnessed her procession and received her girdle as a witness to this, and they believed him. We are told by the Syriac tradition, that St. Thomas took the girdle with him to India and that he was martyred by the heathen priests, and on the 4th century AD. when his relics were transferred to Edessa, also the girdle was with them. At last, reached the Virgin's church in Homs Syria, which was called afterwards by the (Church of

the Girdle). The girdle was discovered in the year 1852, during the time of the bishop of Homs, Mor Julius Peter (later, the Patriarch Mor Ignatius Peter the 4th) and it was put in its place in the altar. It was discovered by the blessed memory the Patriarch Aphrem the first Barsoum. in the year 1952, now is placed at that church in Homs, as a blessing to believers.

THE INTERCESSION OF THE VIRGIN:

If intercession is wrong then there is no point of anyone praying for anyone else.

The Syrian Church seeks the intercession of our Lady the Virgin Mary. The miracles which the Virgin performed for the Church and the believers are uncountable. Her belt is honoured and it is a source of blessing. No wonder, if clothes were put on the Apostle Paul's body and then taken and placed on sick people and receive healing, how much more will be the belt of our Lady the Virgin which was weaved by her pure hands and she engirdled herself with it, and most likely it touched the Redeemer's body! ?

❖ Pray for one another

James 5:16, 2 Thes 3:1, Heb 13:18, Eph 6:18

❖ Examples of Intercession

Abraham & King Abimelech Gen 20:1-7.

Job and his 3 friends Job 42:7-8.

Abraham and Sodom Gen 18:17, 26-32.

Moses and the people of Israel Ex 32:7-14.

❖ Intercessions on Behalf of the dead

For the sake of King David 1 kings 11:12-13, 31-32, Ps 132:10

WE WORSHIP ONLY GOD

We said that we seek the intercession of the Virgin. You did read the translation of some prayers which are lift to God and contain the seek of the Virgin Mary's intercession, but we do not worship her, we worship only God. We disapprove the superstitious worship of Mary. There is no name in heaven or on earth nor under the earth, except the name of Jesus to whom every knee shall bent, for he is the Saviour of the world. The Virgin is a human and who worship her commits blasphemy (Acts 14:11-16). She said about herself: "And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he has regarded the lowly state of his maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For he who is mighty has done great things for me" (Lk.1:47-49). We have to bless her and imitate her virtuous. The best conclusion we give to our subject about her, is a supplication of St. Jacob of Sarug, saying: "May your prayer be with us, blessed one, may your prayer be with us, may the Lord hear your prayers and have pity on us. Full of grace, pray and beseech him who is full of mercy, that he may show mercy to the souls of those who ask for mercy,' Amen.