

St. Mary



Jason and St. Mary

Jason stood in the chancel looking up at the holy picture above the altar. “Why do Armenian churches have a picture of St. Mary and baby Jesus there?” he asked his father. They were waiting for mother who was at a meeting of the parish council.

“I don’t know for sure, but I know that St. Mary is the most admired and respected of all the saints. Perhaps this is one of the ways our church recognizes her importance as

Asdvadzamayr, the Mother of God, the Holy Birth Giver, Asdvadzadin.” Father said, “Let’s take a walk around the church and look at the stained glass windows while we wait for mom. There are a lot with St. Mary in them.”

“Here’s the Annunciation, dad,” said Jason. “That’s when the angel told Mary she would have Jesus.”

“You’re right, Jason,” Father said. “Do you know what St. Mary said to the angel?”

“No, what?”

“Well, she didn’t say ‘Why me?’ or ‘I don’t think I can do it.’ She

said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word.' She believed the angel and had faith in God that he would not give her something to do that she could not do. That's one of the reasons our church loves her so much."

They walked over to the next picture. "This one is the Nativity, the birth of Jesus," father said.

"Mary must have felt very happy then," said Jason.

"This window is of the Presentation of Jesus," said father.

"I know who these two people are. That one is Simeon. God promised him that he wouldn't die until he saw the Savior. The lady is Anna who lived at the Temple and witnessed what Simeon said. She went and told everyone about it."

"This is when Jesus was twelve years old and was talking to the priests at the Temple. Mary and Joseph thought they had lost him, but they found him in the Temple. Do you remember the time we lost you at Sears? We were so worried! When we found you we were very, very happy. I'll bet that's how Mary felt then."

"This picture is of the wedding at Cana. That's when Jesus did his first miracle. His mother asked him to do it. He didn't want to, but he did it for her sake."

"I didn't know you knew that story, Jason," said dad in amazement.

"Don't you remember you bought me that little Bible story book? The wedding at Cana was one of the stories in it."

"Here is the Crucifixion. I always feel so sorry for St. Mary. It must have been so hard for her to see her own son die. Jesus must have appreciated her being with him to the end." Dad looked as if he was about to cry. Perhaps he was remembering his cousin Sarkis and his wife Martha whose son died of cancer last year.

"Come on, dad. There are lots more pictures to look at," Jason said trying to get dad's thoughts off the sad memories.

"Here's a window of the Resurrection. Mary was one of the women who went to take care of Jesus' body when an angel told them he had risen. I'm sure she was so happy then."

Jason walked to the next picture. "This one is of the Ascension and you can see all the disciples and St. Mary watching Jesus go up to heaven."

Dad walked over to the last window of St. Mary. "Here is the Assumption when St. Mary was taken up to heaven."

"St. Mary had a very sad and happy life, didn't she, dad?" Jason commented.

...she did what God asked her to do. That is why she's a saint. She could have said no, but she didn't. Even when it was heart-breaking, she didn't stop obeying God." Father looked around at all the windows. Many other saints' pictures were in the church, too. "I guess that's what all these other saints had in common with St. Mary. Maybe they were following her example."

"I'm going to follow her example too, dad. I like to think of St. Mary as a friend. She's like mom and you, someone I can talk to about anything." Jason took his dad's hand.

"Do you ever pray to St. Mary? You can, you know. It's called a prayer of intercession. That's a prayer you pray to saints to ask them to help you tell God what you want to say. We ask the saints to intercede for us often in the badarak. St. Mary is always the first saint we ask." Father picked up a Divine Liturgy book. "Look here, Jason. We even ask St. Mary to intercede for us in the confession."

Jason took the book and looked at it. "Yes, I remember reading this."

They walked up to the altar again and looked at the picture of Asdvadzadin and baby Jesus above the altar. Both Jason and his dad were silent. Each was saying his own prayer. Each was thinking of St. Mary in his own way.

"St. Mary," Jason said in his thoughts, "tell your son Jesus that he gave me the best dad in the world and I say thank you."

"Mother of God," dad said in his thoughts, "thank your son for blessing me with my son Jason. Ask your son Jesus to help me be a good father to my child as you were a good parent to yours."

"Well, here you two are!" said mother. "I've been looking all over for you. Let's go home. I'm starved. These after-church meetings take so long!"

Jason and dad took mother's arms and they all left the church together. "How about going out for pizza?" Jason asked.

"Sounds great to me!" said mother.

NAMES, NAMES, NAMES!

What is your name?

Do you have a nickname or pet name?

What would you like to be called if you could change your name?

What name might you be given if you were named after someone special?

What would be a good name for you if you were named for some feature or your body? Freckles? Red? Shorty? Or what? What would your name be if you were named for some feature of your personality? Grumpy? Smiley? Pal? Helpful? Or what?

American Indians sometimes did not name a child until something special happened to that child. Perhaps a girl baby might be born on a snowy night and be called Snow. Maybe a boy baby cried when he heard a wolf howl and be called Wolf. If a baby was brought outside and it started to rain and the child's face got wet, he might be called Rain-in-the-Face. If a boy climbed a mountain, he could be called Mountain Climber. The Indians changed their names when something else happened to them that was greater. A child called Foxtail because he liked to play with a fox's tail, might change his name to One Arrow if he became such a good hunter that he could kill an animal with only one arrow.

Armenians name their children for a lot of the same reasons as above. We often give people titles as names. St. Mary is one of these people we have given titles to and we use the titles as her name. These are some of her names:

Virgin Mary — Maryama gooys Saint Mary — Soorp Mariam
Mother of God — Asdvadzamayr Queen of Heaven — Takoohy
Holy Birth Giver — Asdvadzadzin

When you pray to St. Mary, you can use any of her names. She will know you are talking to her! Circle the name you like best.

St. Mary, Our Intercessor

St. Mary, the Holy Mother of God, is one of the many saints of our church. She is called the first of all the saints because of her obedience to God. She is the Church's best example of how to love and obey God. When she was told that she would be the Mother of Jesus, she responded to God's gift of love by saying yes! As a saint, we can ask her to speak to God for us. We can ask her to speak to God with us. We can think of St. Mary as our friend or as another mother to us. Just as you might say to your mom, "Mom, please ask dad for me," you can say to St. Mary, "St. Mary, please ask your son Jesus for me," or "Help me tell Jesus about . . ."

in our Sunday service, we ask the Holy Mother of God to intercede for us, to speak to Jesus for us. In the confession, we confess before God and Mary and all the saints. Look at the examples below and underline St. Mary's name in each.

The Priest:

By the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, O Lord, receive our supplications and save us.

The Deacon:

Let us make the Holy Mother of God and all the saints intercessors with the Father in heaven, that he may be pleased to have mercy and may have compassion and save his creatures.

Almighty Lord, our God, save us and have mercy.

The Priest:

Receive, O Lord, our supplications by the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, the immaculate birth-giver of thine only-begotten Son, and by the supplication of all thy saints. Hear us, O Lord, and have mercy; forgive, expiate and remit us our sins; make us worthy to thank and to glorify thee with the Son and with the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



I confess before God, and before the Holy Mother of God, and before all the saints and before thee, Holy Father, all the sins which I have committed. For I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, willingly and unwillingly, I have sinned against God.

The Priest:

Of the Mother of God the holy virgin Mary, and of John the Baptist, of the protomartyr Stephen, and of all the saints, to be mindful in his holy sacrifice we beseech the Lord.

You can make up your own intercessory prayer to Asdvadzamazm. You might say something like this:

Mary, Mother of God, help me tell your Son Jesus about the wrongs I've done today and ask him to forgive me and help me to be better.

St. Mary, you obeyed God all your life. Help me obey God too. Ask God to make me smart enough to know right from wrong.

I need your help, Asdvadzamazr, to give me the courage to tell God about the things I need. I want so much, but I know having everything is not good for me. Help me know which things I should ask for. Be like my mother and help me make the correct choices.

Now try making up your own prayers.
