

# 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, Asdvadzadzin." 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 handmaiden 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.

“Yes, she did. All her life 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?