

The Nativity of Mary, Asdvadzadzin

About the Virgin Mary



Why does the Church love and celebrate the life of the Virgin Mary? Maybe the best answer is that she shows us what we *all* can be.

Mary was born just as we were, with the possibility to sin. Our church does not teach that her birth began with an “Immaculate Conception” as the Roman Catholic Church does. They say that she started out differently from us, being born without any chance to sin. But all Orthodox Churches teach that she was born as we are, and *chose* not to sin. We are all able to do that, and she shows us the way.

Mary also shows us other things. You know from your “trust walk” that it’s not easy to do what she did — place your safety, your future, your well-being in the hands of another. But in doing so, she agreed to God’s plan for our salvation. So we are *all* involved in her gracious obedience to God. We love her, we are grateful to her, for her submission to God was a gift to the whole world.

We do not worship Mary — only God is worshipped. But like other saints she is venerated — she is seen as a sign that God really works through people who love him. Mary is not just a “symbol” for mothers, or virgins, or women. She is the most exalted of all saints, an example for every man and woman.

As a review of what you've studied about Mary, Joachim, and Anne, answer these questions:

1. Is the story of Joachim and Anne's life told in the Bible? (See *Living the Armenian Church Year*.)
2. What is an important difference between the Orthodox Churches (including the Armenian Church) and the Roman Catholic Church in what they teach about Mary's birth?
3. Read all of Chapter 2 in Luke's Gospel, and pay special attention to the references to Mary. After reading this, what do you think some of her feelings as a mother might have been?
4. How would you explain, to a person who knew little about the Church, the reasons why we venerate and celebrate Mary? Write two or three paragraphs about this.

Mary, Mother of God
ASDVADZADZIN
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