



*O Holy Theotokos,
save us!*

The Life of Mary, the Mother of God
and the Mother of Those who Love God

illustrated by Vasi Bjeletich



Joachim and Anna were very special.

They loved God so much,
and they loved His people.

Joachim owned herds of sheep,
and God blessed him by multiplying them.

Joachim and Anna divided their lambs,
and wool and money into three parts:
they gave one part to the poor;
they gave one part to the Temple;
they kept the last for their household.



And if you needed something,
they would give you whatever they had.

Joachim and Anna wanted a baby.
They prayed and prayed for a baby,
and they promised God that they would
dedicate their child to Him.



The Angel Gabriel came to each of them,
and told them that they would
soon have a wonderful child!

Just as the angel promised,
God answered their prayers
and He sent the holiest of all children:



Mary, the Mother of God.

This tiny baby would become the
mother of all Christians,
and through her, all the earth
would be renewed.

*The day of the Birth of the Holy Virgin is a day of universal happiness.
— St. Damaskenos (universal means for Everyone, Everywhere!)*

When Mary was three years old,
her parents kept their promise
and brought her to the Temple
to serve God.



All of their relatives and friends
joined them in the procession,
carrying candles and singing Psalms
as they lead Mary to the Temple.



Little Mary was only three years old,
but she ran up the Temple steps,
excited to come to the House of the Lord!

The High Priest Zachariah
was waiting for her at the top.

The High Priest Zachariah explained to the people that it was God's will for Mary to come into the holiest place in all of Israel, the Holy of Holies.



Mary lived in the Temple for twelve years. The other girls there loved her, and the angels visited her often and fed her in the Holy of Holies.

Today, the most pure temple of the Savior, the precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the sacred treasure of God, enters the house of the Lord, bringing the grace of the Divine Spirit. The Angels of God praise her. She is the heavenly tabernacle. — Kontakion

When Mary became a young woman, she was too old to live in the Temple, but she did not want to be married.



So the priests found a worthy man
to take care of her.
Mary was betrothed to Joseph.

One day, when Mary was spinning purple thread to make a new veil for the Temple, the Angel Gabriel appeared to her!



“Rejoice, Mary, full of grace.

*The Lord is with you;
blessed are you
among women!*

*Behold,
you will conceive
in your womb
and bring forth*

*a Son,
and shall
call His name Jesus.*

*The Holy Spirit
will come upon you,
and the power of God
will rest upon you.*

*The child who will be born of you
will be holy and will be called the Son of God.
Your cousin Elizabeth is going to have a child in her old age,
because there is nothing that God cannot do.”*

When Mary heard the amazing words of
God's angel, she believed.



“Let it be to me according to your word.”

Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth,
who was married to the Temple's
High Priest Zachariah.



When Elizabeth heard Mary's voice,
the baby leaped inside her!
Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit
and cried out,
"Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"



Mary joyfully answered, “My soul praises the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has remembered me, His humble servant! From now on, all generations will call me blessed!”

Today marks the crowning of our salvation and the revelation of the mystery before all ages. For the Son of God becomes the son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims the grace. Wherefore, we also cry out with him, “Hail, O full of grace, the Lord is with you.” — Apolytikion