



Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem ©
* Knights of Malta *

Chancellor's Update

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A Brief Explanation of a Virgin Birth and Perpetual Virginity

Over the past many months we have had inquires concerning the Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mother and many wish to have an explanation.

In order to do justice to this topic in two sides of one page, we refer you to a series of December Updates 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, on the nature of Christ for background. These issues are on our website in the footer of this page.

To begin with we must separate two doctrines often confused by the media and uninformed Christians, the doctrines of the Perpetual Virginity of Mary and the Immaculate Conception. If you could make your mother, you would make her perfect. God could make His mother and did make her perfect. Thus the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception that states Mary was free from Original Sin from the moment of her conception. This would make Christ's first tabernacle, her womb, perfect (free from sin) since Christ would never be subject to sin. The doctrine of perpetual virginity was proclaimed early in Church history at the Lateran Council 649 A.D. (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, Ch 8).

We begin our explanation of the doctrine of the Perpetual Virginity in Genesis 3: v 15, when God cursed the devil and said: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.* Mary, the Woman, would crush Satan because it would not be humiliating to Satan if God crushed him. To be destroyed by a superior force is not humiliating, but to be destroyed an inferior force (Mary is only a human person – not a pure spirit) is humiliating.

We now apply the lessons from the previous December Updates – God's Plan for the Redemption of the human race begins here. The Triune God sends His Son, Jesus, the God-Man through Mary. Jesus is *NOT* a human person but a **divine person**. Jesus is a **human being** but *NOT* a human person. Jesus will take His humanity from Mary.

Remember that an infinite being had been offended - God. Therefore, an infinite sacrifice would be necessary to amend for the sin of Adam. All the sacrifices of the Old Law (Old Testament) were of no avail because they were **finite**. **But Jesus being an infinite Person offers an infinite sacrifice back to the Father that would be acceptable.**

In St. Luke Chapter I v 26 - 38, we find the Annunciation of the Savior described. Please note the words of the angel: **Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women.** In verse 34 Mary tells the angel: *How shall this happen, since I do not know man?* The angel responds in verse 37: *for nothing shall be impossible with God.*

Now in Isaias 7 v 14, we find God promising to send the messiah through a virgin: *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel.* Now, in Luke 1 v 35: *The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God.* In similar fashion, Matt.1 v 18-25 tells the story of the virgin birth. Please note the Mary conceives from a **divine person** – The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity - *NOT* from a human person. Therefore, the Child Jesus will have all the powers of the Most High and have a human nature from Mary. Hence we can comprehend that Jesus, the God-Man has two natures – Divine and Human. Being divine His sacrifice is acceptable to God the Father because it is an infinite sacrifice, and being human He can offer it on our behalf. Being a **divine person**, He passes through the womb of Mary – *NOT* through the birth canal - just as He passed through the doors of the Upper Room (Jn 20 v 19 &26).

Reason for Veneration of Mary

From the foregoing we see that Mary holds a unique position in God's Plan of Redemption.

Mary is: The Daughter of God The Father, The First Person of the Blessed Trinity
The Mother of God The Son, The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity
The Spouse of God the Holy Spirit, The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Hence, Mary is venerated by all Catholics as she foretold in the Magnificat (Luke 1 v 46 –55) *My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior because he has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid; for, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; because he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name; and his mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the conceit of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has given help to Israel, his servant, mindful of his mercy - Even as he spoke of our fathers - to Abraham and to his posterity forever.*

Mary's perpetual virginity is foretold in Exodus 3 v 2 - 3 and is the symbol of the burning bush that is not consumed by fire nor burnt.

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