



## LESSON 2: WE REJOICE IN MARY THE THEOTOKOS, THE MOTHER OF GOD

# A Woman's Voice: Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Understanding who the Theotokos is and how she is a role model for women and all humanity.

*How can we know, accept, and live out our God-given role in relation to Him?*

### PRAYERS

#### OPENING PRAYER—"IT IS TRULY RIGHT":

*"It is truly right to bless you, Theotokos, ever-blessed, most pure, and Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, you incorruptibly gave birth to God the Word. We magnify you, the true Theotokos!"* (My Orthodox Prayer Book, p. 51)

#### CLOSING PRAYER—FROM THE DIVINE LITURGY:

*"O Christ our God, Who at all times and in every hour in heaven and on earth are worshipped and glorified; Who are longsuffering, merciful and compassionate; Who love the just and show mercy on sinners; Who call all to salvation through the promise of good things to come; O Lord in this hour receive our supplications and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls, purify our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds; deliver us from all tribulation, wrath and distress. Surround us with your Holy Angels, so that guided and guarded by them, we may attain to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory. For You are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen."*



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and has greatly blessed you!" Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God.

The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!" Mary said to the angel, "I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will

rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. For there is nothing that God cannot do." "I am the Lord's servant," said Mary; "may it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her. Soon

afterward Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea."

### PASSAGES

**Isaiah 7:14:** "Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him 'Immanuel.'"

**Luke 1:26-39:** "In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you

### PRAXIS

Four of the twelve great feasts are dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos:

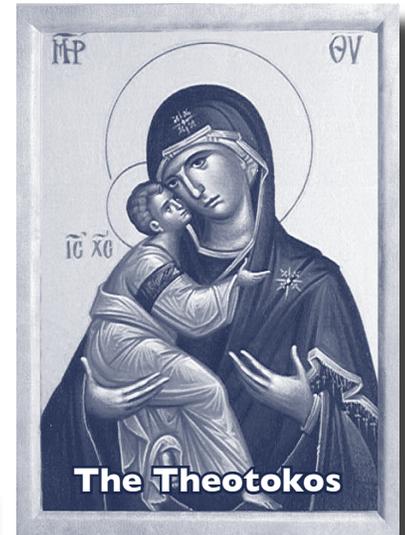
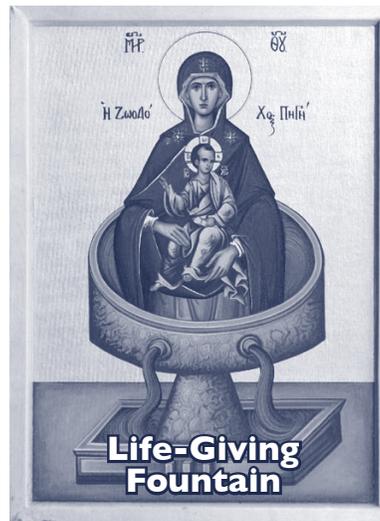
- The Nativity of the Theotokos (September 8)
- The Entry of the Theotokos to the Temple (November 21)
- The Annunciation (March 25)
- The Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15)

In addition, the Paraklesis and Salutation services to the Theotokos glorify the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God and ask her to supplicate to the Lord for our safekeeping and ultimate salvation. These services are held during the two-week fast before the Dormition and Fridays of Great Lent, respectively.

## PATRISTICS

**St. Andrew of Crete:** “The body of the Mother of God, then, is a source of life [for us], because it received into itself the whole life-giving fullness of the God head; it is the precious bridal chamber of virginity, the heaven above us, the earth that brings forth God ...”

**St. Justin the Martyr:** “[The Son of God] became man through the Virgin, that the disobedience caused by the Serpent might be destroyed in the same way in which it had originated. For Eve, while a virgin incorrupt, conceived the word proceeded from the serpent, and brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin was filled with faith and joy when the Angel Gabriel told her the glad tidings that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her ... and she answered: ‘Be it done unto me according to thy word.’ And through her was He born ... by whom God destroys both the serpent and the angel and men who have become like the serpent, and delivers from death those who repent of their wickedness and believe in Him.”



## PARTICIPATION

Speak with your mothers, grandmothers, aunts and other female relatives about the family roles they play.

Visit and speak with Orthodox women monastics (nuns).

Visit the Philoptochos web site:  
<http://www.philoptochos.org>.

Read the stories about the Virgin Mary not in Holy Scripture that are part of our Holy Tradition. They are from a book called *The Protoevangelion of James*.

Read about the Virgin Mary in *The Horologion*.

Read the apolytikia of the Theotokos

