



## Importance of “Motherhood” as seen through St. Mary

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The Feast of the birth of St. Mary is upon us and this feast begins a Church Calendar Cycle that leads us through the Feast of Nativity and the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Church Fathers have stressed the life of St. Mary for a number of reasons that remain very relevant and important for us today.

First, St. Mary is the highest of the Saints that the Armenian Apostolic Church venerates. She is the example of how every human being needs to accept the blessings and guidance of God in one’s life. In addition, she also represents how each person needs to use God’s blessings to help all of humanity get closer to God.

Second, St. Mary is also the ultimate example of motherhood. St. Mary is known as “The Mother of God,” and *Asdvadsadseen* or “The God Bearer,” stated in Greek as “Theotokos.” Many have difficulty with this name because they wonder if God could have a mother. Yet, “mother” from the Bible’s perspective means the living place or vessel, *anot* in Armenian, where life takes form and is nourished. Hence, “Mother of God” means the person in whom the Son of God took flesh and blood. In Armenian this is stated in the *Havadamk*, the Church Creed, as “*marmnatzav, martatzav, dsunav gadarelaves*” referring to the Incarnation of Christ.

Third, St. Mary raised the importance and responsibility of motherhood to new heights. On the one hand, St. Mary showed that being a mother is a calling because in her womb life took shape and was nurtured. On the other hand, St. Mary showed that being a true dedicated mother is a difficult responsibility. When we read the Gospels, we see that St. Mary is at every important event where Jesus is, from the Annunciation to his Crucifixion. The Armenian people throughout the world still emphasize this biblical importance of motherhood as St. Mary did two thousand years ago.

Fourth, this importance of motherhood as an environment or vessel where spirituality is nourished is also emphasized by the insistence of the Church to conduct the Sacraments such as Baptism and Holy Matrimony in the Church Sanctuary. This is to remind the faithful that a human being, family, and a community is eventually nourished and supported within the Church, which is the community of the faithful. Thus, we refer to The *Mother Church*.

Through St. Mary’s life, God has taught us and continues to teach us many lessons even to this day. The above are just four ways that through St. Mary we have gained insight into the relationship of humans with God, the Church, and the a most precious genuine calling known as “motherhood.”