



*“....blessed are you  
among women”*

*“You are truly  
more superior than  
Aaron’s rod, You are Full Of Grace,  
What is the rod but Mary, The rod is a  
symbol of her virginity. She conceived and  
brought forth the Word Himself, The Son of  
the Most High, and without human seed”  
(Theotokia of Sunday)*



**St. Mary and  
the Baby  
Lord Jesus**

My Beloved Children,

St. Mary’s childhood story is simple, yet symbolic and one which is essential for all children to be very knowledgeable and familiar with . . .

St. Mary was born in Nazareth, a town in the northern hills of Galilee. Her parents, Joachim and Anne, loved her very much. They were both righteous people before the Lord.

At the age of three, Joachim and Anne took their child St. Mary to the Temple to dedicate her to the Lord God. She spent nine years in the Temple. When St. Mary was twelve years old, Zacharias, the priest, wanted to find a suitable man to care for St. Mary. He gathered together the canes of her male relatives and put them into the Temple. The next day, the cane of St. Joseph the carpenter budded, just like Aaron’s rod in the Old Testament.



So St. Mary and St. Joseph became engaged with God's blessing. St. Joseph was a righteous and just man. He belonged to the royal tribe of Judah. St. Joseph was actually descended from King David himself!

One day while the virtuous St. Mary was at home, the Archangel Gabriel announced to her some very important GOOD NEWS! The angel told St. Mary, *"God has found favor with you. You will have a Son through God's power and the work of the Holy Spirit. You must name Him Jesus. He will be called the Son of God. The Lord Jesus' kingdom will have no end."* Our beloved St. Mary believed the Archangel Gabriel.



How exciting for St. Mary to be judged worthy by God and to have been chosen as the "Mother of Jesus." Life itself would be born of St. Mary!

This is but a brief account of St. Mary's young life before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May we always give reverence not only to her childhood, but to the known account of the totality of her earthly years and the symbolism found within it to fully appreciate the inspiring life in which she led.

God bless you,

His Grace Bishop Youssef  
Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United  
States