

HELPING US WITH PRAYER -- Holy Mary the Theotokos

The story of St. Mary of Egypt also tells us something about Mary the Theotokos. The word “Theotokos” means the “Mother of God” because she was the mother of Jesus Christ, who is God the Son. Because she was His mother, she was always close to Him, and she still is close to Him in Heaven.

The Theotokos loves us and she prays for everyone in the world.

She prays to God, to help everyone. Mary the Mother of God led Mary of Egypt to repent for her sins and to become a humble person who prayed for others.

No matter what problem we have, we can always ask the Theotokos to pray for us, and she will understand and help us.

“O Holy Theotokos, pray unto God for us.”

QUESTIONS:

1. Saint Mary of Egypt felt truly sorry for what she had done wrong and asked God for to forgive her. To confess sins and ask God for forgiveness is to _____.

T E E R P N

2. Saint Mary of Egypt helped Saint Zosima by showing him that the opposite of “pride” (thinking that we know it all) is _____.

I Y I U H M L T

3. The Orthodox name for the Virgin Mary that means “The Mother of God” is the _____.

O O O H T E T K S

4. When the Orthodox Church “canonizes” a person who lived a holy life, that tells us that the person was a _____.

N A S I T

“The Mother of God helps me in everything.”

(the words of Saint Mary of Egypt)



PRIDE and HUMILITY -- Zozima meets Mary of Egypt

Zozima was a monk who had a lot of education and thought he didn't need anyone to teach him anything else. So God sent an Angel who told him that he had too much **pride**. The Angel told him to go to a monastery in Egypt where he would find someone who could teach him about **humility**.

During Lent, in that monastery each monk would go out alone to the desert to pray. So Zozima went out. After a while, he saw an old woman but she tried to run away from him because she had no clothes. She asked him to give her his cape, so he gave her his cape to cover herself. She thanked him and said his name and knew that he was a priest, even though he had never met her before. She prayed for everyone in the world and said that God had taught her how to pray. He was amazed and realized that she was a holy person.

She told him that she had lived in the desert for 47 years, for so long that her clothes fell apart and she had only plants and roots to eat. She said that when she was young she had done immoral sinful things. Then, on the feast of the Elevation of the Cross she wanted to go to church, but some kind of force wouldn't let her in. Outside the church, she saw an icon of the Theotokos (Mother of God) and prayed to her. She realized that it was her own sins that had stopped her from going into the church. Then she was able to go in. She felt very sorry for all the things she had done. She **repented** and prayed to the Theotokos to help her to become a better person. She then heard the Theotokos tell her to cross the Jordan River to live in the desert. When Zozima asked her how she was able to survive for so long in the desert, she said: **"The Mother of God helps me in everything."**

She asked him to return the next year during Lent. So the next year, Zozima brought Holy Communion to her and they prayed together. She asked him to return again the next year. When he returned, he saw that she had died. But she left a note telling him that she died the same day that he had brought Communion to her. So, he knew that her soul was with God in Heaven.

Zozima learned from Mary of Egypt what it means to be humble. Because they both learned how to live humble lives, they were both "canonized" as Saints, which means that people realized that they were holy persons who loved God.

Zozima came from a rich family. He had a good education and became a monk and a priest.

But Zozima thought that there was nothing else to learn from anyone except what he already knew.

When Zozima met Saint Mary of Egypt in the desert, he saw that even though she had nothing, she loved God and really knew how to pray because she prayed for other people instead of asking for things for herself.

Zozima learned that no matter how much we know, it is "pride" if we think we know it all. There is always more we can learn. When we learn that we don't know it all but that it is God who knows what we need and provides for us, that is "humility."

The story teaches us that:

- > God want us to pray and He answers prayers.
- > God forgives our sins when we are truly sorry.
- > God loves us and knows what each of us needs.
- > God teaches different people in different ways.
- > God will always take care of us, so we must trust Him.

The life of Saint Mary of Egypt is always read during the time of Great Lent because it teaches us about our need to put away those things that keep us away from God.

We don't have to go into the desert and live alone. That was what Mary of Egypt needed.

And God knew that Zozima needed to meet Saint Mary of Egypt to learn about humility.

God gave each of them what He knew they needed.

God knows what you need.