

Homily on “THE THEOTOKOS” -- Seven Questions, Seven Answers

His Grace, Michael – Bishop of New York & the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

Question #1: Why is it that you worship Mary?

Answer: We don’t worship her, we worship only GOD; we venerate her, honor her as first among the Saints: The Scripture itself tells us: *“For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.”* (Luke 1:48).

Question #2: Why call her “Theotokos,” Mother of God, when God has no beginning?

Answer: She is the Mother of Jesus, Who is the Second Person of the Trinity, God Who became flesh – She is the Mother of God Incarnate. Elizabeth called her *“The Mother of my Lord”* (Luke 1:43). Not to call her that is to deny Jesus is God.

Question #3: What about Jesus calling her “Woman” not Mother in John 2:4 and 19:26?

Answer: And, in Revelation 12. Jesus is identifying her as the Woman, the one long waited for, the mother of the Messiah promised by God to the serpent in Genesis 3:15: *“I will place enmity between you and the woman, between her seed and your seed.”*

Question #4: How is she ever-Virgin, when the Gospel says that Joseph knew not her til she brought forth her first-born Son?

Answer: “Til” means “up to the time” as Matthew 28:20: *“I will be with you always, even til the end of the world.”* To be “first born” doesn’t mean there is a second son; it means that he possesses all the rights and privileges spoken of in Exodus 13.

Question #5: What about His brothers James, Joses, Judas, Simon and sisters in Mark 6:3?

Answer: They are brethren in the sense of relatives. Saint Ambrose tells us they were Joseph’s children by his first wife; some say they were Jesus’ cousins. But they weren’t Mary’s children; if they were, why would Jesus on the Cross give her to the Beloved Disciple’s care in John 19:26?

Question #6: Why do you ask her intercession; it says there is only one intercessor, Jesus?

Answer: There is only one intercessor before God the Father – Jesus. Mary and the Saints intercede for us before Christ, just as she did at the first miracle in John 2. It was at her request that Our Lord did His first miracle at the wedding in Cana.

Question #7: How can you say: “Most Holy Theotokos, save us,” when only Jesus saves?

Answer: As the One Who died on the Cross, Jesus is The Savior. But, in a primal sense, as one who saves a man drowning, Mary saves us from dangers, as Joseph did for his brothers in Genesis 45:5: *“God sent me before you to save life.”*