

Short Instruction  
On  
The holy & highly lauded  
Virgin Mary

For a better understanding of the  
simple-minded

Set up in a question & answer format

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Zürich  
At David Gessner 1673

## Friendly/Dear Reader:

In the Christian Church, there has always been a difference among the believers; of those who are perfect, spiritual and have a practiced sense to discern the good and evil, according to the Apostle's admonition of the solid food; while others, as children in Christ, and somewhat inexperienced in the word of righteousness, require milk, and not the solid food. Considering this, I have accordingly found it necessary and useful to explain the teaching on the Holy Virgin Mary, the blessed Mother of God, in a more expansive and long-winded manner, in order to also present unto the latter for suitable instruction this teaching in a short, simple & understandable format of questions & answers. Particularly also to this end, that those who either dwell in their dear fatherland in places & corners where both religions are intermingled; or who must reside in foreign lands among those of contrary religion, that when the need arises, they may be able to give a fine & modest account of their faith according to God's word from this article. To this end, may God the Lord grant His gracious blessing through Jesus Christ!

# Question & Answer

## On

### The holy

### Virgin Mary:

1. **Question:** What does the whole faith of those who desire salvation and to be blessed consist of?

**Answer:** In this: that he knows God and Jesus Christ, his Savior. For (John 17:3) “this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

2. **Question:** How must the saving knowledge of the Saviour Jesus Christ be constituted?

**Answer:** Thus: that I recognize and confess, first, that because of my sinful misery, I can only be redeemed and beatified through a mediator between the wrathful God and myself. Second, that this mediator can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, because (Acts 4:12) “neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” And thirdly, that I know Him as He has been revealed to us in God’s Word for our salvation; furthermore, that I with all my heart believe in Him, put all my trust in Him, seek forgiveness of sins & eternal righteousness from Him alone, & that this faith of mine appear also in its fruits, namely good works & holy living.

**3. Question:** What is revealed to us of Jesus Christ, Our Saviour, in God's Word to our salvation?

**Answer:** That He is true God & true man in one undivided person, so that He, elected by God as a surety & payer for our sins, could, through His eternal Godhead overcome the infinite curse of the law, but through His true humanity be given up onto death for us.

**4. Question:** Whence does our Saviour have His eternal divinity?

**Answer:** From His heavenly Father, who begot Him from eternity, in unity of His divine essence, in an ineffable manner.

**5. Question:** Whence does He have His true humanity?

**Answer:** From the virgin body and nature of the holy Virgin Mary, in whom He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in a miraculous and supernatural way, and from whom He was born into this world in the fullness of time.

**6. Question:** Is the birth of our Saviour from a pure virgin necessary for us to know for our salvation?

**Answer:** Yes, because otherwise we could not recognize and honour Him as our Saviour. For if the Lord Christ had been born of the will of man, and thus in the common way, then what He Himself says would have been fulfilled in Him: (John 3:6) "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." ...

... And in such a way Our Saviour could not have been, (Hebrews 7:26) “for such a high priest becomes us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners”. So that now He could be Our Saviour & true high priest, God the Lord decreed, that He wasn’t conceived and born the common way from woman & man, but in a supernatural manner from a pure virgin through a powerful work of the Holy Spirit. Now, to know this is highly necessary for my salvation.

**7. Question:** What does Holy Writ report of this holy Virgin Mary from before her conceiving & giving birth?

**Answer:** Of her birth & upbringing nothing at all is reported. But when she had reached her nubile years, Holy Writ (Matthew 1:18) narrates that she was married to pious & righteous St. Joseph.

**8. Question:** Since she was ordained by God to be the Mother of our Saviour, and was thus to remain a pure virgin, why then must she be married to Joseph according to God's providence?

**Answer:** So that she would have in him a carer and a guardian, who would partly shield her pregnant body from evil suspicion and the strictness of the Mosaic law, and partly protect her and her future Son's holy persons from all violence and inconvenience & would be helpful to them with advice and deed.

**9. Question:** Through whom and in what form was the mystery of her conceiving and giving birth announced to her?

**Answer:** Through the holy Angel Gabriel, sent by God Himself to her, who addressed her with these words: (Luke 1:26 etc.) “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

**10. Question:** How can we make use of this Angelic Greeting?

**Answer:** In such a way that as often as we read it, hear it, or think about it, we devoutly consider the great grace of our heavenly Father, who sent His Only Begotten Son into the world, born of a woman, and put under the law, so that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life, and at the same time heartily thank Him for this great grace and mercy. For in the Angelic Greeting, this mystery is announced to the holy Virgin, and through her to all believers, which is the true origin of our spiritual redemption and salvation. Besides this, we should also thank God that He wanted to use this Holy Virgin for this great work; and at the same time recognize and praise her blessedness.

**11. Question:** Can and may one also use this Angelic Greeting as a prayer, directed to the Holy Virgin Mary herself?

**Answer:** No, partly because one should pray to none but God alone; partly because this Greeting cannot be called a prayer, but rather a congratulation and announcement of joyful tidings, which occurred towards the holy Virgin when she was nearest to and with the Angel; and thus today, as she is absent from us and no longer in need of such a message, this use could no longer apply. Otherwise, it would also follow that the Angel Gabriel prayed to her with these words. Which even to think about would be absurd.

**12. Question:** But how did the holy Virgin behave after receiving this high message?

**Answer:** Firstly, she believed after sufficient report, and submitted to the will of the Lord with these words: (Luke 1:38) “Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word!” Thereafter, she composed for God the Lord a glorious song of praise, with these words: (Luke 1:46. etc.)

“My soul magnifieth the Lord, And my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour. For He hath looked on the poor degree of his servant: for behold, from henceforth shall all ages call me blessed, because He that is mighty hath done for me great things, and holy is His Name. And His mercy is from generation to generation on them that fear him. He that showed strength with his arm: He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. ...

... He hath filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty. He hath upholden Israel his servant to be mindful of his mercy. As He hath spoken to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever.”

Here I cannot wonder enough at the great humility of this holy Virgin, who does not ascribe the great dignity which she received to herself & her merits, but solely to the grace & mercy of her God & Saviour, & to the covenant which He made with her fathers.

**13. Question:** Did the holy Virgin bear the Lord Christ out of the nature of her own body?

**Answer:** Yes, for Holy Writ testifies (Matthew 1:16) that Our Saviour was born of Mary & namely (Luke 1:42) as a fruit of her blessed womb & (Romans 1:3) was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.

**14. Question:** May one also very well say that the holy Virgin bore God & thus be a God-bearer?

**Answer:** Very well. For since she bore Him who in one undivided person is both God & man, so she bore God manifest in the flesh (1. Timothy 3:16), admittedly not according to the divinity which has neither beginning nor end, but according to the humanity.



**15. Question:** Was the holy Virgin before, during & after the birth, & herewith an ever-pure virgin?

**Answer:** That she was before & during the birth a pure virgin Holy Writ testifies clearly (Isaiah 7:14 & Matthew 1:23). Thus, we also do not doubt that after the birth & herewith she was an ever-pure virgin, partly because Holy Writ, if it had been otherwise, would not have concealed such; partly since otherwise the Lord Christ at the cross would not have entrusted her to John, if she had borne other more children.

**16. Question:** But why is the Lord Christ called (Matthew 1:25) the firstborn Son of Mary; & why are the brothers of Christ mentioned (Mark 6:3)?

**Answer:** A firstborn Son of Mary the Lord Christ is called, not because others after him, rather because no other before him was born. And those who are named brothers of Christ were not his biological brothers, but according to the manner of speaking common in God's Word, his closest friends and relatives.

**17. Question:** What happened further to the holy Virgin Mary after the birth of Christ?

**Answer:** The Holy Scripture mentions very little about this, and nothing more than the following: That she fulfilled the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses, and then brought the Lord Christ to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord and to give the offering according to the Law; that she, with Joseph and the Lord Christ, took flight into Egypt, and at the time appointed by God returned again to the land of Israel, and dwelt with Joseph and the Lord Christ in Nazareth; that in the twelfth year of our Saviour, ...

... she went with Him to Jerusalem for the feast, there lost Him, and after three days found Him in the temple among the teachers; that she attended a wedding with the Lord Christ at Cana in Galilee; that she followed the Lord Christ to the Cross, and remained steadfast with Him until His death, where she was also entrusted to the holy John by Him: and finally that after the resurrection of the Lord Christ, and after His ascension, she persevered in prayer with and alongside the holy Apostles and godly women.

**18. Question:** Can one know anything substantial of her mortal departure?

**Answer:** That she, at the time appointed by God, departed this world through mortal passing is beyond all doubt, because (Hebrews 9:27) “it is appointed unto men once to die”. But when, where and how she departed this world, we find nothing at all in the Holy Scripture. It is also unnecessary for us to know for our salvation.

**19. Question:** But in what kind of a state is she now?

**Answer:** In a most blessed state, wherefore she is in heaven, in the communion of God, her Son, all saints & elect, partaking in the highest and unspeakable glory. For if blessed are all the dead who die in the Lord from now on (Revelation 14:13), how much more then she who was here in time the graced one, the blessed among women, and who through the Spirit of God prophesied of herself (Luke 1:48) “From now on all generations shall call me blessed”?

**20. Question:** Is it not appropriate that she be held in great worth and honour by all true Christians?

**Answer:** Who would not consider it appropriate? Since she was not only here in time such a glorious vessel of God's honour, adorned with such high gifts, graces, and virtues, the likes of which no other mere human has ever been, indeed being the blessed Mother of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: but also after this time has been taken up into eternal glory, to the blessed vision of God's countenance, where she without a doubt was through the grace of her Saviour, born from her, elevated above every other creature.

**21. Question:** But does it stand in the free will of men to venerate her at one's own discretion?

**Answer:** No. For (Psalm 75:7) the exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the desert, rather God is the judge. He is who brings down & He is who exalts. Thus, the veneration of the holy Virgin, should it be pleasing to God the Lord, must be instituted according to the word of God & not according to the peculiar arbitrariness of men.

**22. Question:** In what manner & form then, must she be venerated by us?

**Answer:** In general, we may bestow & accord her also the greatest honour, of which a nonpresent, rather from us absent, with highest glory in heaven blessed creature is capable; excluding also nothing but only that honour, which is due to no one other than God the Most High. ...

... But particularly, she is rightly honoured according to God's Word to His gracious pleasure, firstly, when her memory remains blessed among us, according to the admonition of the wise man (Proverbs 10:7). Secondly, when God the Lord is thanked for all the blessings with which He showered the Holy Virgin, according to the reminder of the Holy Apostle Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:18) to be thankful to God in all things. Thirdly, when the Lord Christ, her only-begotten Son, who is the foundation of all her honour and dignity, is held high and worthy, and is thoroughly obeyed, since (Luke 1:47) her spirit rejoiced in no one else but God her Saviour. Fourthly, when the praise of her virtues, gifts, graces, and blessings in the Lord is extolled, proclaimed, and spread with a praising mouth, as she was also honoured in this way by her kinswoman Elizabeth, when she said to her, (Luke 1:42) "Blessed art thou among women". Fifthly & lastly, when you obey her transmitted command, and live according to her faith, love, hope, humility, and other excellent virtues, and follow them zealously, according to the admonition of the holy Apostle Paul (Hebrews 13:7): "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."

**23. Question:** How does, firstly, the memory of the holy Virgin remain with us in blessing?

**Answer:** When we hold her in our hearts as a most highly blessed vessel and means of God's honour, speak of & consider her honourably and as is befitting, and earnestly scold, shun and hate all those who speak of her otherwise than according to God's word and dishonour her, and guide those who are caught in error concerning her onto the right path with righteous reason.

**24. Question:** How, secondly, is God the Lord thanked because of her?

**Answer:** When we, because of the great gifts, graces & blessing with which He showered her, first & foremost, that He by means of her revealed His only-begotten Son in the flesh & made Him our Lord & Saviour, give thanks with all our hearts.

**25. Question:** How, thirdly, is she honoured in her Son?

**Answer:** When we perceive the one conceived in her by the Holy Spirit and born of her flesh, Lord Christ, as our only Mediator, Saviour, and Advocate, seek our redemption, salvation, and righteousness in Him alone, serve Him alone, and in life and death place all our trust in Him alone.

**26. Question:** How, fourthly, is the Holy Virgin honoured with praise?

**Answer:** When we, on all occurring occasions, proclaim her praise and honour with praising tongues in the Lord: and herewith spread, primarily the unspeakably great blessing, as she has been exalted by God Himself to the dignity of a Mother of God, which is far greater than if any earthly woman had given birth to all Monarchs and Kings who have been from the beginning of the world until now, and further will be until its end: then her strong faith and confidence in the Divine promise, through which she surely believed the high, all human understanding surpassing mystery announced to her by the Angel Gabriel of the birth of the Saviour in her virgin body, through the power and illumination of the Holy Spirit: in addition to this, the radiant splendour of her other excellent virtues, ...

... such as her humility, as she so deeply humbled herself, ascribing everything to her Saviour and to the mercy of God, and acknowledging herself as a maid of the Lord: her hope, as she, despite her own and the Lord Christ's temporal and miserable condition, did not let her courage sink, rather waited for the fulfilment of the promise with certain confidence: her diligence and devotion in hearing the Divine word, as she kept all the words of Christ & of the shepherds, and compared them in her heart: her fervour in prayer, as she persevered in prayer with the Holy Apostles and godly women: her patience and composure throughout her whole life, as she willingly and with a composed heart endured her great poverty, persecutions, and all kinds of crosses and misery: her virginal discipline and chastity; and especially her brave steadfastness, as she did not forsake the Lord Christ in His greatest need, like His Apostles, but accompanied Him to the Cross, and at the Cross indeed looked upon Him compassionately, yet also with undaunted courage: and finally also her glorious and blessed state, which she attained after her death.

**27. Question:** How is she lastly honoured, through the execution of her command, and through willing imitation?

**Answer:** For she has left us behind a main command which encompasses the entire path of our salvation, and is contained in these few words (John 2:5): “Whatsoever He, (my Son), saith unto you, do it”: so she is honoured most highly when you obey according to her word the command of the Lord Christ, which mainly consists in that we believe in Him alone and repent. Thereafter, you honour her through willing imitation, when you step into the praiseworthy footsteps of her faith and virtues, and herewith also, following her example, believe in the word of God and its infallible promises, even though they surpass all human understanding; ...

... surrendering yourself freely and composedly to your God, and speak with the Holy Virgin: "Behold, thy servant/thy maid. Be it unto me according to thy word!" When you further with her manifest your faith with the fruits of good works, particularly of fervent prayer and song of praise, just as she, after receiving the Divine promise, sang such a glorious song of praise: when you ground your faith solely and exclusively on Jesus Christ your Saviour, as her spirit also rejoiced in her Saviour; and thus daily, yes presently, receive Him in your heart as a temple of the Holy Spirit through true faith: when you, in or outside of marriage, strive for God-pleasing purity and chastity in body and soul: when you willingly deny yourself, patiently take upon yourself the cross of Christ, be it poverty, persecution, or whatever name it may have; when you keep the word of God, and wisely ponder it in your heart: and finally when you do not despair in adversity, rather remain faithful and steadfast to Christ your Saviour until death, just as she, although she saw her Saviour on the Cross, did not despair, rather believed in hope against hope.

**28. Question:** But can she not furthermore be venerated as a mediator and intercessor between God and us with the honour of invocation?

**Answer:** No, since no one should be invoked except God alone in Christ, our only Mediator, Saviour, and Intercessor (Deuteronomy 6:13; Matthew 4:9; 1 John, 2:1-2), and Him, who is almighty, all-knowing, and present everywhere, and can thus know the sighs and thoughts of the heart as present & all-knowing, hear prayer, and as an Almighty God fulfil our hearts' wish & prayer. Thus, we neither have a command nor any example from the Apostles or others who prayed to the Holy Virgin. Moreover, such an honour would not be pleasing to the Holy Virgin, ...

... partly because she never considered herself such a mediator, rather was only raised to such by men from their own pleasure, whereas she perceived herself as a maid of the Lord and rejoiced in her Saviour Himself; partly because she herself directed us to no one else but to her Son, when she said: "Whatsoever He, (my Son), saith unto you, do it"; partly because she prophesied of herself with these words: (Luke 1:46) "From henceforth, all generations of the world shall call me blessed", but she does not mention her invocation as a mediator. We simply follow the Word of God and the teaching of the ancient Christian Churches, which spoke (Epiphanius, haereses 79) Mary should be honoured, but God Father, Son & Holy Spirit worshiped. Mary no one should worship. Thus, we do not refuse the Holy Virgin the honour of invocation out of contempt for her, but in the fear of God and out of love for a holy righteousness, which gives each & everyone what belongs to him, unto God what is God's, unto the Son of God what is His and unto the Mother of God what is hers.

**29. Question:** What kind of honorary titles are due to the Holy Virgin Mary?

**Answer:** All those which are partly given to her in God's Word, partly suitable to her holiness, gifts & high blessing. Except for those honorary titles which belong to God the Lord and to our only Saviour, one may give her the highest and most glorious titles. Particularly, she can be named from God's Word a Mother of God, a Bearer of God, a Graced One, an Ever-Pure One, a Holy One, a Blessed One, adorned with excellent faith and the most glorious virtues, among all women most blessed Virgin, etc. But that we do not name her a Goddess, a Mediator between God and men, an all-knowing and almighty Queen of Heaven, a Gate of the Heavenly Paradise, a Redeemer, a Reconciler of the human race, ...



... and more suchlike honorary titles which were raised by men, comes solely therefrom, that suchlike honorary titles are adverse to the honour of God and of Our Saviour.

**30. Question:** May one not also erect images in honour of the Holy Virgin & worship the same?

**Answer:** The righteous image of the Holy Virgin is the infallible witness of the Holy Word of God of her highest blessing, gifts, graces & virtues. Whoever constantly reads the same, devoutly, in honour of the Holy Virgin, for oneself for one's edification, considering the benefit & salvation, & keeping them in a refined & pure heart, does not lack any further depiction. Particularly, God's Word (Exodus 20:4-5) forbids using graven, carved images in divine service, to venerate the same & worship them, may one do such in whatever manner & form one desires.

**31. Question:** May one not also vow and perform pilgrimages hither or thither to the images or sanctuaries of the Holy Virgin Mary?

**Answer:** This spiritual pilgrimage, where one not only with the eyes of faith ascends to the third Heaven and beholds there the Holy Virgin in her highest blessing: but also applies oneself to devout reading and contemplation of the holy Word of God, in which the deeds and omissions of the Holy Virgin, as far as we need to know, and her true sanctuaries are testified, is without any doubt pleasing to God the Lord and sufficient for our salvation. That we however do not bodily vow or perform pilgrimages hither and thither to the images and sanctuaries of the Holy Virgin, happens therefore: partly since we have no command for it; ...

... partly because God's Word forbids us to worship anyone other than God in Christ; partly because the true worship of the Christians in the New Testament, if it happens only in spirit and truth, has an equal power & effect in any place.

**32. Question:** May one not also hold feasts & holidays in honour of the Holy Virgin?

**Answer:** The everlasting memory of her faith & of her steadfastness, the godly contemplation of what God's Word praises & testifies of her, & the selfsame's right usage in God's honour, of her praise & our salvation, replaces at ours the lack of holidays & feast days in her remembrance more than enough. Apart from that, we know that God the Lord among His people, neither in the Old nor in the New Testament, never instituted holidays & feast days in honour of the holy patriarchs, the Holy Virgin, the Apostles & other saints.

**33. Question:** Is the Holy Virgin not also hereby honoured, when one opines that she was here in time also, like Our Saviour, freed from all sin?

**Answer:** If I am not being coerced, I would rather be silent on the sin of the Holy Virgin in honour of Our Lord, than say something. But should I ever give an account of my belief, so I find in the Holy Word of God not at all that anyone other than Christ our Saviour is exempted from all sin. For the Lord Christ to be born without sin, he had to be conceived in a supernatural way not by the will of man, rather by the Holy Spirit Himself. But where do we read the same about the Holy Virgin Mary, or anyone else? The Holy Scripture says (Romans 5:12) all have sinned in Adam, and thus excludes no single mere human. ...

... St. John says (1 John 1:8) If we, including himself, say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. So also, the Holy Virgin herself recognized the Lord Christ as her Saviour (Luke 1:47). But now whose Saviour the Lord Christ is, He makes whole and redeemed from sins, as God's Angel himself testifies (Matthew 1:21). And who would want to doubt that the Holy Virgin also, according to Christ's command, prayed the holy Our Father, and therein these words: "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors"?

But although we well believe with God's Word and the Old Christian Church besides Our Saviour no human here in time was completely free from original sin and human weaknesses; yet we also thereby believe that the Holy Virgin was temporally & perhaps yet in the womb renewed by the Spirit of God & born again: sin was forgiven unto her through the merit of her Saviour, so that in her remained no damnation or dominion of sin: She, after her regeneration, never committed any wilful, intentional sin or vice & was more sanctified, more freed from sinful frailties than even any of the most holy children of God. And it would herewith be a very inapt, yea, if it happened out of intentional malice, a godless speech, if someone would want to say: "The holy Virgin Mary was a woman like other women." Then, not to mention, that no other woman bore the Saviour unto the world: thus, you can well hope it, but are not certain, that this or that woman be a child of God & of salvation, while Holy Writ itself testifies such of the Holy Virgin. Moreover, no other woman, not even the pious Sarah, Rebecca, Deborah, Hannah, Elizabeth, or others who are remembered in God's Word, was adorned with such high gifts & graces, faith & virtues, as the Holy Virgin & Mother of God. A true Christian should herewith guard himself very diligently from suchlike erroneous speeches.

**34. Question:** But does it not serve to the Holy Virgin's dishonour, when she is not as Our Saviour Himself exempted from sin?

**Answer:** If someone, out of malicious intent, would want to hereby vilify her, or also accuse her of some vice, he would irresponsibly dishonour her. Who however in the above-mentioned manner, in case of required necessity, would speak of the sin of the Holy Virgin, without any other intent or mood, than solely to give unto God the Lord the honour of His grace & mercy, unto Jesus Christ the honour of a solely immaculate Lamb, which takes away the sins of each and every believer, & unto the holy word of God the honour of its immutable truth; how could he, in speaking out of & with God's word, hereby dishonour the Holy Virgin in the slightest? Even the holy David says of himself (Psalm 51:6) "in sin hath my mother conceived me": The holy Apostle Paul of himself (Romans 7:17) "sin that dwelleth in me": the Holy John (1. Epistle of John 1:8) "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Now whoever would say in honour of God, Our Saviour & in support of the truth, out of God's Word, that the holy David was conceived in sin, that in the holy Paul sin dwelled, that the holy John had sin, should he hereby dishonour them in the least, & in like manner all the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles & Elect of God? Not to mention that the sin, which is remitted through the merit of Christ, & which God the Lord wills no longer to remember, but indeed to cast into the depths of the sea, can no longer serve to dishonour or disadvantage anyone.

END.