

The Fullness of Heaven and Earth

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us reflect on some wonderful words about the Virgin St. Mary in the conclusion of the Friday *Theotokia** in the daily midnight praises (Tasbeha). Here they are:

- + *Many are your praises, you who are adorned with every honor, for you became a dwelling for the Wisdom of God*
- + *You are the rational hook that catches the Christians and teaches them how to worship the life-giving Trinity*
- + *You are the one who carried the Pillar which Moses saw, Who is the Son of God, Who came and dwelt in your womb*
- + *You became an ark for the Creator of heaven and earth. You carried Him in your womb for nine full months*
- + *You are also the one entrusted with the fullness of heaven and earth. You became a reason for us, to progress to heaven.*



Let us pause and reflect on this amazing sentence; *'entrusted with the fullness of heaven and earth'*. It reveals to us the incredible responsibility entrusted to our Mother St. Mary, while she was still a young girl, just 15 years old. God, Who sits on the fiery cherubic throne, Who is worshipped by the fiery hosts, and Who cannot be contained in heaven or earth, was pleased to take a dwelling for Himself in the womb of the Virgin Mary!!

What amazing humility!

What wonder and glory!

And at the same time, what an incredible responsibility!

Solomon, in times of old, prayed after building the Temple and said; *'But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!'* (1 Chronicles 6:18). Now behold, here is the Virgin becoming like **the cherubic chariot** (Ezekiel 1), carrying the divine throne. Furthermore, she carries Him in her womb, and gives Him the full human nature (the 6th part of the Thursday *Theotokia****) so He is united with it from the very first moment of the divine pregnancy, and through our unity with Him we progressed to heaven.

The question that arises here is **"why and how was the Virgin St. Mary worthy enough that God entrusted her with Himself?"**

The Wednesday *Theotokia* says; *"the Father looked from heaven, and found no one like you, He sent His only-begotten, Who came and took flesh from you"*. Yes, there was no one like St. Mary in the whole world.

1. There was no one like her in **holiness and dedication of heart to the One and only beloved, and in how she rose above everything of this world.**

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2. There was no one like her in **humility, taking the last seat in everything, and, indeed, denying herself completely**, reaching what the Church Fathers called '*Apatheia*', a state of being free from all passion and desire.

3. There was no one like her in **silence, quietness, and keeping all the mysteries and pondering them in her heart** (LK2:19). She obtained a level above human understanding in these virtues, to the point that she did not tell anyone about the angel's annunciation to her, not even Joseph her fiancé!

4. There was no one like her in **endurance, and patience in facing hardships**, without complaining or grumbling, no matter how harsh the circumstances were. We saw this during the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in a humble manger, during the sudden and harsh flight to Egypt, and during the terrible events of the cross which were like a sword piercing through her kind and gentle heart. She endured all of these hardships with strength, thanksgiving, and total surrender to the will of God.

5. There was no one like her in **love, the spirit of service, and caring for others**. She traveled long miles to serve the elderly Elizabeth. She helped in the kitchen during the wedding of Cana of Galilee although she was one of the most important guests at the wedding.

6. There was no one like her in **honesty and faithfulness while undertaking the incredibly huge responsibility of the mystery of the divine incarnation with all its details**.

Truly she was worthy to be entrusted with the fullness of heaven and earth!

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-Translation and footnotes by Sherif Gayed

* '*Theotokia*' is a glorification for the Mother of God St. Mary. It comes from the Greek word '*Theotokos*' which means 'Mother of God'.

** 'The whole nature [the literal word in Coptic is '*dough*' indicating fullness of nature with all its components] of humanity, she gave fully to Him, God the Creator and Logos of the Father' – the 6th part of the Thursday Theotokia.