

MOTHER OF LIFE

“Love and veneration for the Virgin Mary constitute the soul of Eastern piety, its heart, that which warms and animates the whole body” (Bulgakov, Orthodoxy).

This Love of the East for Mary is apparent in the names with which Mary is invoked: the All-Holy, the Virgin of Compassion, the Virgin who heeds us quickly, the Virgin who saves from sorrows, the Virgin of the sweet kisses, the Virgin who nurses, and the Virgin who indicates the way.

However, there is a constant and authentic harmony in the Eastern prayer to the Blessed Virgin: Mary is never separated from the mystery of Christ. This trait is exemplified in the icons where the all-pure Mother always has her Son next to her.

HOW can we fail, O all-holy one,
to determine your Divine and human child-bearing!
O all-immaculate one,
without the help of a man,
you brought into the world
a Son Who has no father according to the flesh.

He is the Word begotten in eternity by the Father,
without mother.

He suffered no change, admixture, or division but integrally retained the characteristics of each nature.

O Lady and Virgin Mother,
beseech Him to save the souls of those who, in true faith,
acknowledge you as the Mother of God.

The Prophet David
who, for your sake, was an ancestor of the God-Man,
addressed the following words, in his hymns, to the One Who has done great things in you:
“The Queen takes her place at Your right hand” (Psalm 45:10).

God has chosen you to be the productive Mother of life.

He became a human being in you,
without a human father,
in order to restore in human beings
the image of Himself that had been tarnished by sin.

He did so to lead back to His Father
the little sheep lost on the mountains,
carrying it on His shoulders,
to reunite humankind with the Powers of heaven,
and so save the world,

O Mother of Christ the Lord
Who is rich in mercy!