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## **Blessed St. Mary “An Honored Lady of No Choice”**

**BY H.G. BISHOP YOUSSEF**

St. Mary was miraculously born to a rich man named Joachim and his barren wife, Anne. From the age of 6 months “undefiled” daughters of the Hebrews cared for St. Mary. At the very young age of 3, St. Mary was then taken to reside in the Temple at Jerusalem.

**Did St. Mary choose to live in the Temple?** Zacharias the priest wanted to find a suitable man to assume the care for St. Mary. The priest gathered together the canes of her male relatives and placed the canes in the Temple. The following day, the cane of St. Joseph the carpenter budded, similar to Aaron’s rod in the Old Testament.

**Did St. Mary choose to become a carpenter’s wife?** During the time of St. Mary’s engagement to St. Joseph, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and announced that she would bear a son to be named “Jesus”, a royal successor to King David. When St. Mary objected that she had no husband, the angel explained, “the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” the Child will be called holy, the Son of God.”

**Did St. Mary request to bear a son?** An enduring example of obedient faith, she replied, “*I am the handmaiden of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word*” (Luke 1:35,38). God asked St. Mary to accept the Divine Incarnation. Indeed, this is an example of the free grace of God, but as we know St. Mary herself humbly accepted obedience. The Lord Jesus Christ’s great love for His mother, a lady of no choices was evident since on more than one occasion He stressed the importance of the command to, “*honor your father and your mother*” (Matthew 15:4). In the familiar and endearing story of the Wedding of Cana of Galilee, St. Mary had a great opportunity to bring honor to her name. Through her conversation with the people of the wedding and informing the Lord Jesus Christ of lack of wine at the celebration St. Mary could have brought acclaim to her name. Rather, the Lord Jesus Christ understood the love of His mother for His children and displayed the trust of His mother in Him. Also while not giving worship to her personality, St. Mary directed our hearts to secretly carry out the commandment of her only Son, “Do whatever He tells you.” While holding His beloved mother in high esteem, as the Lord Jesus Christ was dying upon the Holy Cross He tenderly committed His mother to the care of the “disciple *whom He loved*” (John 19:26). This was a mother who had no choice but to watch her only Son become nailed to a cross, to publicly endure suffering, and die. St. Mary was a woman of great strength and fortitude. Having been given no choices to major events surrounding her she continues until today to shine forth brilliantly. With her character and strength she overcame many emotional peaks and valleys. The threat of divorce from St. Joseph, a long foreboding trip to Bethlehem, giving birth in a stable, having to use an animal’s feeding trough for her newborn baby’s bed, angelic warnings that the King wanted her infant Son killed were more than enough to make the strongest of persons distraught. Furthermore, the mother of our Lord had a prestigious lineage. She was, like St. Joseph, of the tribe of Judah and of the lineage of David (Psalm 132:11; Luke 1:32; Romans 1:3). St. Mary had a sister, named like her, Mary (John 19:25), and she was related by marriage to Elizabeth (Luke 1:36), who was of the tribe of Levi & descended from Aaron.

**With such ancestry as this, did St. Mary ever asked the Lord why all these things must happen to her? Why was she not given choices related to her life?** St. Mary used her free will to submit to all the major events within her life. Through submission a harmonious disposition was obtained. St. Mary was a “pure” virgin. Pure meant that she loved good works, did not want to be seen by men, only by God. The Holy Bible displays her speech as calm and virtue steadfast. Her faith and devotion brought forth obedience to the Lord, respect from others, and a desire to live a retired family life. Surely St. Mary desired the best gifts and more excellent way.

**St. Mary’s love did not:** Envy (I Corinthians 13:4), Parade itself, nor was puffed up (I Corinthians 13:4), Behave Rudely (I Corinthians 13:5), Seek its own (I Corinthians 13:5), Allow anger, was not provoked (I Corinthians 13:5), Think evil (I Corinthians 13:5), Rejoice in iniquity (I Corinthians 13:6), Fail (I Corinthians 13:8)

**St. Mary’s Love:** Suffered long and was kind (I Corinthians 13:4), Rejoiced in the truth (I Corinthians 13:6), Bore all things (I Corinthians 13:7), Believed all things (I Corinthians 13:7), Hoped all things (I Corinthians 13:7)

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# UPCOMING RETREATS AT ST. MINA'S – 2012

November 1-3

**Group Retreat**

November 23-24

**Commemoration of the Feast of St. Mina**

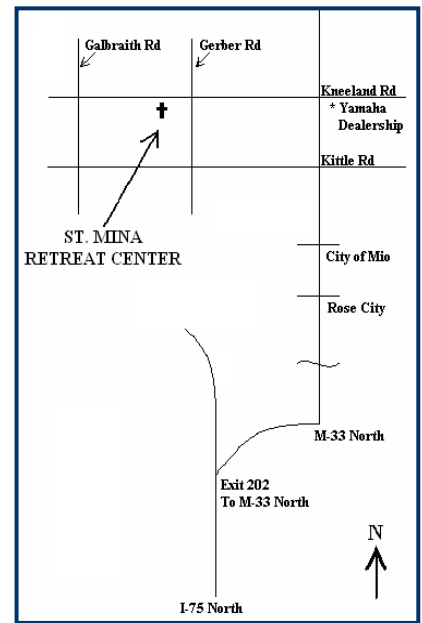
December 22-23

**Deacon's Retreat**

## WHAT'S NEW AT ST. MINA'S RETREAT CENTER...

### MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT RETREAT – JUNE 2012

For the 5th consecutive year, a group of 45 middle school youth along with 18 servants spent a great time at St Mina Retreat center. This year's theme was "Dare to be different". The youth had an open dialogue with Abouna Mina about why and how to be different and what are the barriers to achieve that. At night we prayed Asheya followed by open fun time spent laying basketball, volleyball, enjoying the paddle boats in the ponds and gathering around the bonfire. We celebrated the Holy liturgy in the morning and all the afternoon rafting on the Ausable River. We had the blessing of Tasbeha and the great surprise this year was seeing the firework on the lake. Truly, we enjoyed the Christian fellowship, the spiritual guidance and fun-filled time. Excitingly, we are looking forward to next year's retreat.



## OTHER NEWS...

St. Mina's Retreat Center now has a new building recently opened to receive around 70 participants. This new facility is equipped with a large gathering area and full kitchen facilities to support groups coming for a retreat. We invite to come and enjoy the peaceful and blessed surrounding.

If you know anyone who is not currently receiving this newsletter and would like to receive it, please send their information to [info@stminaretreatcenter.org](mailto:info@stminaretreatcenter.org)