

MARY THE "SINNER" - AS COLD AS HER STATUE

The Roman Catholic Church says that the Blessed Virgin Mary was without sin all her life.

Mary is not a great role-model. She is a turn-off if you go to her for her inspirational example. As Buddha's disciple Ananda said, you may have to let yourself be a little haughty in order to overcome haughtiness. Real men and real women need to do wrong to a point to stop doing wrong. If you abstain from food because you are dieting, food is all you will think about. Better to eat a little at least. Same and sane principle.

There is positive evidence against the notion that Mary was never ever tainted with sin.

AS COLD AS HER STATUES

Most Christians think there is nobody like the "noble" Virgin Mary even if they don't pray to her. Rome says that she has always been impeccable and is now the creature that is next to God.

Unfortunately for Roman Catholicism, the author of Matthew's gospel didn't think much of her at all. He told two stories to show her up as cold and smug in the extreme.

Matthew called Joseph an upright man though he wouldn't turn Mary in to pay the penalty of the law when he thought she was pregnant because of adultery (Matthew 1:19). That is an affront to the women who had died by this law with his approval. Joseph was acting like a hypocrite. Mary whose pregnancy was visible would have told him to obey the law if he believed she had broken it and put her trust in God to rescue her and her baby. She must have known what he was thinking.

Mary was also one for going out of her way to lie. She married Joseph. Marriage is for sex. The only thing that can invalidate marriage if the vows were valid is non-consummation. Marriage is the giving of body as well as heart and because the heart can change it is more giving of the body. By taking Joseph to be her lawful wedded spouse while intending not to let him near her Mary was lying to the whole community merely by being at the ceremony, to their families and possibly to her husband. Though women did not take vows as such, she was making an oath to God merely by being present. She made an oath which she did not intend to keep. If she really did contract a mock-marriage with Joseph he would not have believed her when she said her baby was fathered by the Holy Spirit because she was a deceitful person. She made it unlawful for Joseph to desire sex with her for she refused him. It is a sin to tantalise a man with unlawful sex. By marrying Joseph and staying with him, Mary did that to him. Her cruelty and falseness are not great credentials for her story of the annunciation which the Catholic Church says could only have started with her. And Joseph was no better than she was if he married her with his eyes open. His story of the angel telling him that Mary had conceived by God is therefore dubious.

If Mary and Joseph agreed to have relations at their wedding and subsequently changed their minds and took vows of continence then we have them taking unlawful vows for they broke the sacred promise of marriage. They turned it into deceit. Matthew termed the magi deceivers for deciding to break their promise to Herod for a grave reason.

Mary should have broken off her engagement to Joseph if she agreed to have God's baby without a man if she could not obtain his consent and approval. Matthew says that Joseph did not know who the father was. She treated him as if he had no rights.

Mary was annoyed and upset when the angel Gabriel told her that she was highly favoured and that the Lord was with her (Luke 1:29). We are told in the account that this was her reaction not to the angel but to his greeting and she wondered what it meant. Obviously it was news to her that there was anything special about her. She did not see herself as sinless. She even could not imagine how the Lord who is rejected by sinners and not with sinners could be with her. At least she knew what she was a sinner! Also, it is likely that the greeting may have implied some divine mission for her so Mary was afraid of being made a better person. She certainly assumed that this being was from Heaven and was not a demon pretending to be an angel.

Some think that, "Mary may or may not have contradicted the angel after he told her that she would have a baby when she asked him how she being a virgin could have one." But she certainly contradicted him. If we don't know for sure, is it right to be as cocksure as a Catholic that she wouldn't argue? Also Mary had never been told that she didn't need a man. The angel never said she didn't after this question strongly suggesting that she was being sarcastic for there is no need to answer sarcasm that is expressed in such a way that you know the person knows you are right. The angel would still speak of the

overshadowing and the descent of the Holy Spirit making the child the holy Son of God which he did after, if Mary conceived by a man for Son of God meant godly man. The angel does not specify how she will get pregnant so we should take him to have the normal way in mind. She was saying no child of hers could be the holiest person ever.

Elizabeth told Mary that she felt so unworthy that the mother of the Lord came to her. The Church says there was no sin in Mary not refusing this compliment for it was not a compliment to Mary but to her child. I can say, "Who am I that the car of my Lord has come to me?" I am not grovelling before the car but the Lord.

But it is not cars we are talking about but persons. She said that she was honoured by the mother.

Mary told Elizabeth that God is her saviour who has shown her mercy. If it is wrong to praise one's own good works as the same gospel says (Luke 18:9-14) it is likewise wrong to boast that one is saved for that means that one is saying one is good and reformed now. She was a pompous young lady.

Mary worried about Jesus when she lost him in Jerusalem for three days. Worry is a sin especially when it is God's son that one is in a state about for it implies that God is thought to be incompetent. That she looked for him at all was a sin.

Mark wrote that Jesus' family went to seize him thinking that he was mental. Later he said that they arrived and that his mother was there. She was participating in a plan to silence Jesus and discredit his ministry. It would have been a terrible sin for Mary who knowing that Jesus was God's son to start calling him mental. Some say that Mark was writing to people who knew that Mary was united in heart and soul with Jesus and who knew not to include her when he wrote about Jesus' family violently opposing his ways. Mark is a very simple gospel with very elementary doctrine. Does it really look like something that was composed for experts in the Christian faith? "Family" includes Mary.

Matthew 13 has people asking how Jesus could be so wise and do great things when you think about what he had for a father, mother, brothers and sisters. The implication is that none of them are in any way special - indeed far from it.

In John 2, we read of the famous wedding of Cana. At the reception, Mary told Jesus that the wine had run out. Jesus' sharp reply shows that this was said in a bossy go-and-do-something-about-it tone. He put her in her place. He would not have corrected her if she forgot her place as a subordinate to the Son of God for he would have realised that it was just a mistake. She was insolently patronising him. He replied that his hour had not come. The Church irrelevantly says he meant that the hour of his death and resurrection hadn't come. Jesus simply meant, "It is not the time for me to help." But he lied. He did help. If Jesus was a good man, then he lied to his mother for the gravest of reasons. She was such an evil woman she gave him no choice. The story doesn't say why he felt he had no choice but believers can be sure that his mother was a dangerous woman.

The gospels say the Jews hated Jesus. But in the Talmud and in Jewish tradition from the early Christian period before Mary was turned into a near-divinity, the Jews seemed interested beyond belief in portraying Jesus' mother as a dissolute bad girl when they could have spent the ink on attacking Jesus. They had no need to do that for many Christians would have thought that if Jesus' mother was bad that only shows how good Jesus was in resisting the bad influence. They picked on her for they knew what she was - bad news. The stories seem plausible. There is even some gospel support that Mary was a bad cookie.

The Jews had no problem believing Jesus' mother had illicit sex to produce him. If such accusations surfaced, it was easy for her to prove her virginity if she was indeed a virgin for life as the Catholic Church says. There were women appointed to check out women who claimed to be virgins. Jesus never denied that he was illegitimate. Christians say that he was legitimate because he had no human father. He did not expect anybody who knew his mother to believe that he was legitimate. What kind of woman must she have been?

Jesus experienced total desolation on the cross and felt abandoned by God and all his friends had abandoned him. He cried out that God had forsaken him. The gospels speak of the women who followed him standing watching at a distance. Psalm 22 where the man speaking in the person of Jesus according to the gospels says that all who see him mock and deride him would indicate that they were not there out of compassion. John alone says that Mary Jesus' mother was at the cross. It does not say she was there in any supportive sense. The Psalm and Jesus' desolation would indicate that she was not supportive at all but probably gloating.

Mary was a sinner. She must find Rome's exalted notions about her utterly offensive now – supposing she is a saint in Heaven that is.

JEWISH TRADITION

The Jewish tradition about Mary is that she was a hairdresser of loose morals who had sex with a Roman soldier who

fathered her baby. The convincing thing is that they picked on her and not Jesus who they supposedly hated. And that in an age before devotion to Mary become widespread. The gospels speak of Jesus being called a bastard. Matthew in his gospel went out of his way to put disreputable women in Jesus's family tree. It seems that people knew Mary was not a virtuous virgin and Matthew wanted to do damage limitation by arguing that she was not the only one in Jesus' lineage. Mary sacrificed in the temple to atone for the dirtiness of having Jesus. Luke says she sacrificed. The Church says she did not need to. But that is only speculation. Luke says nothing to indicate that she did not need to. You would think he would have said if she hadn't.

JOHN 1

From Jubilee 2000 Bible

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with the God.

3 All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not the Light, but was sent to bear witness of the Light.

9 That Word was the true Light, which lightens every man that comes into this world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name,

13 who are not born of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Jesus came to his own. This is thought to refer to the Jews. But the context does not say that at all. The line before talks about all people - that is, the world.

He says that Jesus came to his own and his own rejected him. But those who accepted him became God's children without it having anything to do with how they were born into this world. So we read then that being related to Jesus does not make you a child of God. Is it saying that some people from Jesus' family accepted him? No. It says that his own rejected him and that many - meaning non-family members did accept him. That this rather random fact had to be preserved for us in a hymn indicates that the family never came round.

John the Baptist is described as a believer in John indicating that John unlike the Luke Gospel, has not heard of the allegation that Jesus and John were related. Or he is denying it.

PETER WON'T USE HER AS A MODEL OF WOMANHOOD

1 Peter 3 goes,

3 Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes. 4 Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

COMMENT: Sarah was far from an ideal example and she was an incestuous wife to Abraham. She is a desperate example. That Jesus' mother is not a model here as a wife or as chaste is incredible. And Peter was writing for Christians not avid Bible readers. Christians say Mary was not married long enough to Joseph and not enough was known of her marriage for her to be an example. If people are good by nature or mostly good, then you cannot win anybody to your religion by being good for everybody in every religion is as impressive as you. The implication is that other religions are bad and Christians should be an improvement on other religionists and thus be able to draw in converts by living a good life even if they don't verbally evangelise

Conclusion

The Virgin Mary was not the best woman ever. She committed lots of wrongs or sins if you like.

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