

## MUSLIMS' BELIEF IN THE BLESSED MOTHER

It was a great surprise to me to hear of the great devotion of Muslims, especially the women, to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary, the mother of Jesus features prominently in the Qur'an. In fact, there is a chapter in the Qur'an devoted to Mary and is the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an. There are many references to Mary in the Qur'an (more than are in the Bible) beginning with the story of the angel's annunciation to Mary:

When the angels said, "O Mary, indeed God give you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary." (Q. 3:45) Mary responds with surprise, asking "how will I have a child when no man has touch me?" (Q.3:47. Mary is reassured "God creates what God wills" (Q.3:47)

The Qur'an affirms Jesus was born of a virgin named Mary, echoing the claims made in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. But Muslims believe there was no Joseph. They do believe that Mary was chosen by God "above all the women of the world" for her chastity and obedience. Many who, because of their reverence for the Virgin have no qualms about visiting Christian churches. Muslim women also admire her because "she is able to face hardships in her life because of her faith, her belief in God." Many carry religious medals of the Virgin Mary. A priest, Yohanna Yassa, shared that often Muslim women who want to get pregnant come to his church and pray. Father Yassa said: "Mary is calling us spiritually and because of that, both Muslims and Christians love her and respect her."

References for this article are from My Neighbor is Muslim produced by the Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota and

The Article: The Virgin Mary: The World's Most Powerful Woman published in Geographical Magazine, author Maureen Orth, December 2015.