

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

Did Mary Give Birth To Other Children?

Know This...

All Christians believe that Mary gave birth to Jesus; and most Christians affirm that Mary bore her Son without violation of her virginal integrity; but the Catholic Church goes even further. It proclaims that Mary remained a virgin before, during, and after the birth of her Son. Some Bible passages make reference to the brothers and sisters of Jesus; but no passage calls anyone the son or daughter of

Mary. Jesus is Mary's only biological child.



John: Mk 6:3 calls four men the brothers of Jesus; but Mk 15:40 reveals that two of them are the sons of another Mary.

James: Mt 1:25 says that Joseph did not have relations with Mary until she bore Jesus; but the Bible shows that the word 'until' does not mean something will happen later.



John: Jesus says He will be with us always, until the end of the age. (Mt 28:20) Does this mean Jesus will not be with us after the age? No.

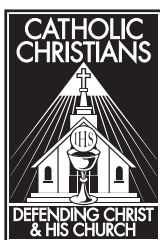
James: Paul says Jesus must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet. (1 Cor 15:25) Does this mean Jesus will not reign after they are under His feet? No.

John: From the cross, Jesus gave His mother to John the Apostle. (Jn 19:26-27) He would not have done this if Mary had other sons.

James: Because Jesus was Mary's only child, she was able to assent unconditionally to the will of her Son. Upon her Son's death, Mary became the Mother of us all.

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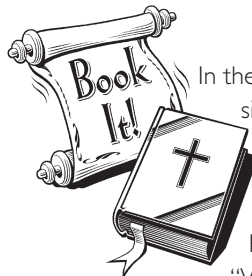


"Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit." ^{Mt 1:18} "Then the angel said to her; 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' But Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?' And the angel said to her in reply, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.'" ^{Lk 1:30-35}

Mary's question to the angel is important in understanding how she viewed her relationship with God and with Joseph: "How can this be, since I have no relations



with a man?" Mary was not naïve; she knew how women became pregnant. St. Augustine wrote in 401 A.D. in his letter *Holy Virginity*, "She would not say [this] unless she had vowed herself to God as a virgin... If she intended to have intercourse, she wouldn't have asked the question." St. Augustine also wrote, "A virgin in conception, a virgin in giving birth, a pregnant virgin, fruitful virgin, a perpetual virgin." ^{Sermon 186} "Christ's birth did not diminish His mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it." ^{ccc 499} "Mary is a virgin because her virginity is the *sign of her faith* 'unadulterated by any doubt,' and of her undivided gift of herself to God's will." ^{ccc 506}



In the first century, the word 'brother' could mean sibling, relative, friend, or acquaintance. In Mk 3: 31-35, Jesus called His disciples brothers and sisters, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." In Acts 21:7, Paul calls other Christians 'brothers' when he says, "We continued the voyage and came from Tyre to Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed a day with them." In the original Hebrew, Gen 11:26-28 shows that Lot is Abram's nephew; but in Gen 14:14, Lot is called the brother of Abram.

Holy Spirit, You are the spouse of the Virgin Mary. You chose Joseph, a descendant of David and a righteous man, to be Mary's most chaste guardian. You knew he would respect and protect her and her Son. Mary and Joseph placed their trust in You and willingly surrendered to Your will. Their example should guide my life. I pray that like Mary and Joseph You will give me the grace necessary to do Your will always and everywhere. I ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Father, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

