

Ever Memorable Mary of Blairsville, Pennsylvania

Written by iconographer Nicholas Papas

Mary Abraham was born in Syria, around 1900. As a young girl she came to America, where she lived a long and difficult life. Through her difficulties, she acquired a powerful, overflowing love for people. She always had a garden for both vegetables and flowers. Even into her eighties, when she presented her beautifully arranged flowers before the icons at St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Black Lick, Pennsylvania, it was with the simplicity of a little girl giving flowers to her beloved mother.

In her seventies and eighties, Mary was known to the students of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at Indiana University of Pennsylvania as "Situ", which is Arabic for "grandma". She opened her home to them and always made great food for them, much from the produce of her garden. Her door was always open and she had a kind, listening ear. She would share wonderful nuggets of spiritual wisdom and encouragement in a thick Arabic accent.

Archbishop JOB (1946-2009) related that she once spoke on an impromptu invitation to a Sunday school class about her love for the Eucharist. She said, "There are many wonderful things in life that you will do and see and have but the most wonderful is to receive Holy Communion. You receive Jesus in Holy Communion and Jesus is Love."

[At one time as Mary lay near death], the Virgin Mary appeared to her and laid her veil on her. The Theotokos told her that she would not die yet, but that she would have two more years to live. In those final years, Mary's love shone even more. Everyone who encountered her simple love firsthand is fully persuaded of her sanctity. Bishop JOB commemorates her as "Ever Memorable Mary." There are many who have attested to her holiness and answers to her prayers. Mary fell asleep in the Lord September 28, 1986. Situ Mary, pray to God for us!

Nicholas Papas has written an icon of Ever Memorable Mary which has been placed over the entrance to his studio (<https://www.facebook.com/Nick.Papas.Studio>)

September 28th

Troparion (*Tone 4*)

Your hospitality showed the depth of your faith an image of your namesake Abraham. Like him you were visited by holiness. Your visitor, The Pure Virgin, gave solace with Her veil. O Blessed Mary of Blairsville, pray to Christ our God to save our souls.