

## PRAYER TO MARIA BAMBINA

Hail, Infant Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou forever,  
and blessed are thy holy parents Joachim and Anne,  
of whom thou wast miraculously born.  
Mother of God, intercede for us.

We fly to thy patronage,  
holy and amiable Child Mary,  
despise not our prayers in our necessities,  
but deliver us from all dangers,  
glorious and blessed Virgin.

V. Pray for us, holy Child Mary.  
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

### ***Let us Pray:***

O almighty and merciful God,  
Who through the cooperation of the Holy Ghost,  
didst prepare the body and soul of the  
Immaculate Infant Mary  
that she might be the worthy Mother of Thy Son,  
and didst preserve her from all stain,  
grant that we who venerate with all our hearts  
her most holy childhood, may be freed,  
through her merits and intercession,  
from all uncleanness of mind and body,  
and be able to imitate her perfect humility,  
obedience and charity.  
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.



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## *Maria Bambina* *The Infant Mary* *Milan, Italy*



***Holy Infant Mary,  
obtain for me the grace to love the Lord  
faithfully during all the days of my life.  
Obtain for me, too,  
a great devotion to you,  
who are the first creature of God's love.  
Amen.***

## *Maria Bambina*

As Jesus is adored in His Divine Childhood, Mary is venerated in her childhood. The contemplation of the infancy of the woman chosen by God at the beginning of time (Genesis 3:15) to bring forth the Savior is an ancient practice; the Church even celebrates her nativity on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September -- one of only three birthdays so honored, the other two being those of Jesus and His Precursor (St. John the Baptist). All of these were born without the stain of original sin -- with St. John having been filled with the Holy Ghost while in his mother's womb (Luke 1:13-17, 44) -- though only Jesus and Mary were *conceived* filled with grace.

Most of what we know of Our Lady's childhood is known through apocryphal sources: the [Gospel of the Nativity of Mary](#), translated from the Hebrew by St. Jerome (A.D. 340-420) from a manuscript whose date and origin is unknown to us, and the [Protoevangelium of St. James](#), written around A.D. 125. From these works, we learn of her parents, SS. Anne (Feast: 26 July) and Joachim (Feast: 16 August), and it is with them, especially with her mother, that the young Mary is usually depicted. We learn, too, of Mary's miraculous conception, her having been dedicated to the Temple, etc., and the ancients knowing these stories, too, built churches in honor of Mary and her parents very early on in Jerusalem.

In A.D. 1007, in the city of Milan, Italy, the church "Santa Maria Fulcorina" was dedicated to the "Mystery of the Nativity of Mary" and eventually became the cathedral church of Milan. The present-day cathedral was built, and was later consecrated by St. Charles Borromeo in A.D. 1572 and dedicated to "Mariae Nascenti" -- "The Nativity of Mary." This city, then, became one of the centers of devotion to the Child Mary.

One hundred and sixty-three years later, a wax image of Mary as a baby ("Maria Bambina") was made by Sister Isabella Chiara Fornari, superior of the Poor Clares in Todi, Italy. It was taken to Milan, ended up

in the hands of the Capuchin Sisters there, and was passed down through their Order until it was given to a priest who then gave it, in A.D. 1876, to the Milanese Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity, in whose hands it remains today.

As time passed, the image of Maria Bambina became rather decrepit and discolored. It's "skin" took on a grayed yellow cast, so it was kept out of sight only to be brought out on the Feast of Mary's Nativity. Then, on that Feast in 1884, Sister Josephine Woinovich, suffering horrible pain and bedridden due to paralysis in her feet and arms, asked that the image be brought to her bedside so she could better pray to Mary for her intercession.

Her wish was granted, and her request inspired the Mother General to take Maria Bambina around to the other sick sisters. One of these sisters was miraculously cured, and two more sisters were cured in the next few months.

In January of the next year, the image itself was "healed" in a sense; without human help, the yellow-gray cast of the "skin" was replaced by the natural hues of flesh that remain today. Devotion to Mary spread through these miracles, and on 31 May, 1904 the image was solemnly coronated by Cardinal Ferrari.

Couples began to venerate the image when they were trying to conceive a child, and it became a custom to give newlyweds a small wax image of Maria Bambina on their wedding day.

You can see Maria Bambina at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity, Via Santa Sofia 13, Milan Italy.

\*(excerpted from: [www.fisheaters.com](http://www.fisheaters.com))