

The Pagan Priest

*The Virgin has always striven to make herself known to those who know her not,
and to show them her goodness.*

On this I will tell you a very fine miracle which Holy Mary performed for a hardened pagan who worshipped idols and would not hear of her name as he bore her so much ill will

nor did he have any desire to believe in the works of her Son, and if anyone spoke of them, he would turn his back on them. And so I will tell you what befell him one day, so that his heart was turned to the Virgin.

He lived in Byzantium, which is now called Constantinople the Great, and was settled by Constantine, but in that earlier time our faith had been born and they kept it hidden from the pagans.

And that priest of the pagans of whom I first spoke was set upon making an image of an idol which would give him a clear answer, and would speak and not be silent.

He had already made a mould, with which he was very satisfied, and when it was well heated he poured metal into it, but he did not find an image of the form he expected, for by God's power a better likeness appeared to him.

For while he expected to see a demon that he could worship and which would reply to whatever he asked, he saw a lady with her child, as if she was nursing him, with his mouth to her breast. And when he saw this

he marvelled greatly and was so amazed that he went around all his temples to ask them if they knew of such an image in which any god was portrayed, or if any people worshipped and believed in it.

And as he had no reply from the pagans, he at once ran to ask the Christians if they had such an image, and they said "We are sure that this is an image of the Virgin, who was chosen by God

to be his mother". And they at once took him into the church and when he saw a statue of that Lady who is ever blessed he said, "I want no more strife with you, for this image is just like the other which was made known to me."

And saying that he became a Christian and tore down the temple of which he was keeper and destroyed all its images, for he did not want to waste his life, and when he died his soul was received

into that holy place where all the saints praise our Lord with sweet singing. This was the work of the Virgin mother of God, who performs more miracles than could ever be counted, for she always works to do good.