

8. September 2023

## Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Chosen by God

Mt 1:18-23

*This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being an upright man and wanting to spare her disgrace, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: Look! The virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.*

The Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which we celebrate today, shines especially brightly because of the extraordinary vocation of the Virgin, to have given birth to the Son of God and to have followed Him to the end. It is therefore logical that today's Gospel speaks of the Redeemer whom God entrusted to her and to St. Joseph. But we should also pause to meditate on Mary's great contribution to the work of Redemption, for, as St. Augustine says, "God, who created you without you, will not save you without you". This Feast therefore lends itself to celebrating, on the one hand, her election and, on the other hand, her response to this election.

Mary is not simply a figure in the biblical stories; she is alive in the faith of the people. When I was in Mexico, I was able to witness the deep love that this people have for the Virgin of Guadalupe. And with good reason they love her so much, for the history of the evangelisation of Mexico is intimately connected with her apparitions.

But Mary is also very important for our path of following Christ. Whoever abandons himself in her will be led to an ever deeper relationship with her Son; and will learn from her to love the Lord and to let himself be loved by Him. With gentleness and

firmness at the same time, Mary introduces those who trust in her to the profound mysteries of love for God and man; and she helps them to fulfil God's Will as she herself did.

We cannot forget how much she cares for the destinies of mankind! Through many apparitions, the Virgin Mary expresses her warnings and also gives us concrete advice for our spiritual life. It is amazing how many times in the course of history Our Lady has manifested herself, showing us her motherly love. In this way, she lets us see that her mission continues from heaven, and that the Church triumphant works hand in hand with the Church militant.

We need only recall the message of Fatima, where she appeared just over a hundred years ago. Mary clearly intervened in order to avert the evils that befell a large part of humanity because of ungodly communism. She gave concrete indications to avert the misfortunes that were about to come, but it seems that they were not sufficiently accepted.

What better gift could we give her than to cooperate in bringing to people the goodness of God, with whose love she is filled and to whose call she responded with total dedication. Then people will experience that they not only have a loving Father, who wants to save them in His Son and embrace them in His love, but that He has also given them a Mother, giving them in her a special sign of His love.

Let us praise the Virgin Mary, and let us honour in her and with her the infinite grace of God, who descended upon her to accomplish the work of salvation for all men. Let us not forget to pray the Holy Rosary daily; this prayer which Our Lady loves so much and through which we can contemplate the mysteries of the Redemption through her maternal heart.