

Nativity of Mary

September 8



The Church celebrates only three birthdays in the liturgical calendar: The Nativity of our Lord on December 25th, the birth of John the Baptist on June 24th, and the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 8th.

Tradition holds that just like Abraham and Sarah, Mary's parents Joachim and Anne could not conceive a child throughout their many years of marriage. After strict fasting and prayer, an angel appeared to Anne and told her that the Lord heard their prayers and they shall bring forth a child who will be honored by future generations. Joachim and Anne were in their old age when Mary was Immaculately Conceived. This means that Mary was formed in her mother's womb free from Original Sin. The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is December 8th, exactly nine months before the Feast of the Nativity of Mary.

Through apocryphal texts, we learn that when Mary was three, Saints Joachim and Anne took Blessed Mary to the synagogue in Jerusalem and dedicated her life to the service of the Lord. It is said that she was consecrated a Virgin. She entered into a chaste marriage to Joseph.

From her conception, Mary was commissioned with the highest honor bestowed on any human being: to be Mother of God. She was the masterpiece of God's creation, perfectly conforming her will to the Will of God. In the Old Testament, Eve, mother of the living, exercised her free will by being disobedient to God when she ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This resulted in the Fall of mankind into sin so that what followed was physical and spiritual decay and death. All of humanity descended through Eve. Now all of mankind has the nature to sin. In the New Testament, Mary, mother of all who truly live, exercised her free will so that she was perfectly obedient to God. Because of Mary's humble acceptance of God's Will, the gift of salvation came through the Incarnation, God in the flesh, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. Through Mary's cooperation with the Incarnation, all of humanity is offered an eternal life in Heaven. Mary is the spiritual Mother to those who are faithful to Jesus Christ.

Mary's birth is considered the dawn of our redemption while Jesus' birth brought us the fullness of salvation. For this reason, we acknowledge the Blessed Virgin Mary as "Cause of our Joy!"

"Let us celebrate the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for from her arose the Sun of Justice, Christ our Lord." ~Antiphon from the Roman Missal