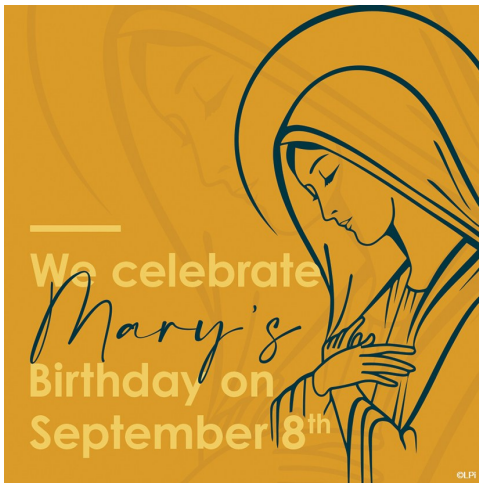


FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ, who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. As we journey together, I write to you today with a heart full of joy and gratitude. We are approaching the beautiful Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated on Monday, September 8th, a day that invites us to contemplate the dawn of our salvation in the birth of Mary, who would become the Mother of God. In the Holy Spirit, let us delve deeply into this mystery, allowing it to illuminate our path of Faith.

This feast is not merely a historical commemoration, but a living event that echoes in our own lives. The Nativity of Mary marks the beginning of God's definitive intervention in human history, the first light breaking through the

shadows of sin and death. As we know from the sacred tradition of the Church, Mary was born to Sts. Joachim and Anne after years of barrenness - a sign of God's power to bring life from sterility, much like the barren fig tree that Jesus curses and then promises fruitfulness to those who believe. **We are called to experience this ourselves: how the Lord takes our own barrenness - our sins, our failures, our empty rituals - and transforms them into fertile ground for the Gospel.** Mary's birth is a prophecy fulfilled, the fulfillment of Isaiah's words: "The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). **But it begins here, in her humble origins, reminding us that salvation comes not from human strength but from God's election and grace.**

Let us first turn to the Word of God to understand this feast more profoundly. The Scriptures do not recount Mary's birth explicitly, yet the entire Bible prepares for it. Think of the women of the Old Testament: Sarah, barren yet mother of nations; Hannah, whose prayer in the temple leads to Samuel's birth; Elizabeth, who in her old age conceives John the Baptist. Mary is the culmination of this line of faithful women, the new Eve who crushes the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). Her nativity is the quiet announcement that the time of fulfillment has come. Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant, carrying within her the presence of God. In the icon of the Nativity of Mary, we see her cradled in the arms of Anne, surrounded by midwives and angels, a scene that mirrors the birth of Christ himself. This parallelism is no accident; it shows us that Mary's life is entirely oriented toward her Son. She is born Immaculate, preserved from original sin by the merits of Christ's passion - a dogma proclaimed by Pius IX in 1854, but lived in the Church's heart from the beginning. **Mary's purity calls us to hope: if God can prepare such a vessel for his Son, he can renew us too, scrubbing away the old man to reveal the new creation in Christ.**

Community brings this feast alive in a tangible way. We are not isolated believers but a people on the move, like the Israelites in the desert. **Mary's nativity teaches us about election: God chooses the lowly, the forgotten, to confound the strong** (1 Corinthians 1:27). Joachim and Anne, elderly and childless, represent all of us who feel inadequate. Yet from them comes Mary, and from Mary, Jesus. This is the logic of the Cross. I encourage you to use this feast as an opportunity for evangelization. Invite those on the peripheries - the lapsed, the searching - to the parish. Share how Mary's birth is a sign of hope for broken families, for those struggling with infertility or loss. Have you seen miracles? Couples reconciled, children baptized, vocations awakened? **Mary's intercession is powerful; as the Mother of the Church, she gathers us under her mantle, just as she did at Pentecost.**

Finally, this Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary calls us to renewed conversion. In a world marked by secularism and despair, Mary's birth shines as a beacon: God is faithful to his promises. **She who was born without sin intercedes for us sinners, leading us to her Son.** Let us fast and pray in preparation, examine our consciences, and ask to live the beatitudes more fully. May this feast deepen our love for the Church, for our Pope, and for one another.

Peace,