

The Virgin Shall Conceive and Bear a Son and They Shall Name Him “Emmanuel”!



Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a Son and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a Son, and they shall name Him Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.” (Mt 1:18-24)

Only the Gospels of Matthew and Luke give the Infancy Narrative of Jesus’ birth, the only historical record we have of those early years which become the foundation for the Church’s definition of the dogmas regarding Mary, her Immaculate Conception, her divine motherhood, her perpetual virginity and her glorious Assumption. Matthew’s Gospel was the first to be written and is the most highly quoted. Matthew was a Jew and wrote for the Jews. He knew the Hebrew figures of the promise and showed Jesus as their fulfillment. He calls Jesus the “son of David to acknowledge Jesus is a descendant of David’s and is the fulfillment of God’s promise to David that from his line would come a King whose reign would never end, for this Son, born of a Virgin as foretold by the prophet Isaiah, shall be named “Emmanuel,” the Anointed One, Messiah-Lord, King of kings! He also called Jesus the “son of Abraham, father of the great nation Israel, God’s chosen people. Jesus is head of the new Israel, the people of God under the New Covenant, the Church. The Gentile Magi who saw a new star rise in the heavens understood that it confirmed the birth of a great ruler on earth. They followed the star to Jerusalem and King Herod from whom they learned of the prophecy about Bethlehem of Judea. **And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.** (Mt 2:6-7)

David was the shepherd king, but Jesus, as stated in John's Gospel, is the Good Shepherd who will shepherd God's people and call them by name and lay down His life for His sheep. Jesus will surpass the people's longing for another king like David, or for any earthly king. The small towns of Bethlehem and Nazareth, insignificant to the rulers of that day, were very significant in God's plan for our salvation and showed His predilection for the poor and lowly. God delights to exalt the humble and to humble the exalted. The little town of Bethlehem was exalted as the birth place of the Messiah, and Nazareth--which prompted many to ask "What good can come from Nazareth?"--was the place where Jesus grew in wisdom and age and grace before God and man.

St. Luke's Infancy Narrative begins with the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist, the Annunciation, Mary's visit to Elizabeth, and the birth of Jesus. Mark and John, however, go immediately into the adult life of Jesus and His public ministry. Mark starts with the preaching of John the Baptist and the Temptations of Jesus and Jesus' public ministry. John's Gospel opens with the beautiful prologue that speaks of Jesus' eternal existence with God and is followed by the Baptist's testimony that Jesus is the One Who was prophesied to come. Hence, we see the Gospels speaking both to the Sacred Humanity of Jesus and to His Divinity. We also see foreshadowed in the Magi the acceptance of the Messiah by the Gentiles, and in Herod and much of the population of Jerusalem, the rejection of Jesus by His own. Joseph, legal father by virtue of giving Jesus His name, would be forced to flee into Egypt to protect Jesus and His Mother, not to return until after Herod's death. This flight and return would mirror the Exodus experience of God's people of old. Furthermore, the bitter sufferings of Jesus' birth and flight into Egypt would prefigure the future sufferings of His Passion and death and rejection by the Jewish people, which prompted God to reveal His saving mystery to the Gentile world.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, #'s 65-67, speaks of Jesus' birth:

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these days he has spoken to us by a Son. Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father's one, perfect, and unsurpassed Word. In him he has said everything; there will be no other word than this one. ...The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.

Private revelations like that of Our Lady of America are not part of the deposit of Faith, the public revelation obligatory to our Faith, but, if they are not contrary to Faith, they can greatly aid us in living our Faith more fully. Our Lady confirms to Sister Mildred

Neuzil her role as Mother of Jesus, Mother of God, Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix of grace.

I am the Mother of the sacred humanity, and it is my special work as co-redemptrix of the human race to help souls reach the sanctity of the Father in eternal union by showing them how to put on Christ, to imbibe His Spirit, and thus become one with Him.

...God looks at the heart, and if it resembles the Heart of His Divine Son, it is with the greatest pleasure He regards it. But to make your hearts grow more and more like to the Heart of the Son, you must go to the Mother, whose heart is most like His. ...My heart, my Immaculate Heart, is the channel through which the graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men.

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Fostoria, OH, Pgs. 24, 18.)

Mary is co-redemptrix because she shared in Jesus' redemptive mission as no other. Her "fiat" was necessary because God does not violate the gift of free will which He gave us. She is **Mediatrix of Grace because Christ chose to come to us through her in grace just as He came to us through her in the flesh.** The Church has long recognized this intercessory role of Mary's, especially in the first public miracle Jesus performed at her behest at the wedding feast of Cana. Jesus is the only Savior of mankind, the only Mediator before the throne of God, but Mary is at His right hand as **intercessor and maternal mediator with her Son**, the Way, the Truth and the Life. She always takes us to Him.

Who can fathom the magnitude of God's humility in laying aside His divinity to take on our wretched humanity? If God can humble Himself so before us, then we must humble ourselves before Him, the One who deserves infinite adoration. God chooses where the world would not. The poor shepherds were first to hear the Good News of Jesus' birth and to find Him in a manger, poor like themselves, long before the Three Kings arrived bearing gifts of great worth. Mary, the humble handmaid of the Lord, had this to say to Sister Mildred about humility and simplicity:

You are not being accepted because you are a small one. ... God has no need of anyone, yet He chooses the smallest of the small for His glory. Sweet child, let your humble heart be filled with a great confidence, for my Son is in love with your lowliness and simplicity of heart. Make known to souls the preference my Son has for humility.

On August 16, 1956, Sister wrote her spiritual director recounting Jesus' words spoken to her on the feast of the Sacred Heart.

My little white dove, how humility and simplicity are despised by the proud of this world. For despising the humble, Christ will judge them. By my humility and simplicity of Heart I glorify My Father more than all the Angels and Saints together. So it is that the humble soul glorifies God more than all the great of the world.

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