

Reading for the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

8th September 2026

First reading

Micah 5:2-5a

‘From you shall come forth one who is to be ruler in Israel.’

Thus says the Lord:

You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,

who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,

from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel,

whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has given birth;

then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,

in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

And he shall be their peace.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 13(12):6ab. 6c. R Isaiah 61:10a

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.

As for me, I trust in your merciful love.

Let my heart rejoice in your salvation.

I will sing to the Lord

who has been bountiful with me.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Joyful are you, holy Virgin Mary, and most worthy of all praise,

for from you arose the sun of justice, Christ our God.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23

‘That which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.’

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,

and they shall call his name Emmanuel' —

which means, God with us.

Short reflection on the reading for today

The Church has celebrated Mary's birth since at least the sixth century. A September birth was chosen because the Eastern Church begins its Church year with September. The September 8 date helped determine the date for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8.

Scripture does not give an account of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. However, the apocryphal *Protoevangelium of James* fills in the gap. This work has no historical value, but it does reflect the development of Christian piety. According to this account, Anna and Joachim are infertile but pray for a child. They receive the promise of a child who will advance God's plan of salvation for the world. Such a story, like many biblical counterparts, stresses the special presence of God in Mary's life from the beginning.

This is one of the most ancient Marian feasts. It is thought that this feast originated in connection with the Feast of the dedication of a church dedicated to Mary, now the Church of St Ann, in Jerusalem in the 6th century. Tradition holds that this is where the house of Mary's parents, Joachim and Ann, stood and where she would have been born.

Saint Augustine connects Mary's birth with Jesus' saving work. He tells the earth to rejoice and shine forth in the light of her birth. "She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth the nature inherited from our first parents is changed." The opening prayer at Mass speaks of the birth of Mary's Son as the dawn of our salvation, and asks for an increase of peace.

We can see every human birth as a call for new hope in the world. The love of two human beings has joined with God in his creative work. The loving parents have shown hope in a world filled with travail. The new child has the potential to be a channel of God's love and peace to the world.

This is all true in a magnificent way in Mary. If Jesus is the perfect expression of God's love, Mary is the foreshadowing of that love. If Jesus has brought the fullness of salvation, Mary is its dawning.

Birthday celebrations bring happiness to the celebrant as well as to family and friends. Next to the birth of Jesus, Mary's birth offers the greatest possible happiness to the world. Each time we celebrate her birth, we can confidently hope for an increase of peace in our hearts and in the world at large.