



8 September 2018, 6 p.m. | Saturday, 22nd Week, Year II

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Micah 5:1-4 | Psalm 13 | Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23

## A NEW CREATION

We come together today to celebrate the birthday of Mother Mary. This day is filled with a lot of feelings and sentiments, of gratitude to Mary for the role that she plays in our lives. Mary is so deeply connected with Jesus that if we relate with Jesus, we automatically get into connection with his mother Mary. Jesus gave us his mother in the Cross. Let us treasure her in our lives as our model and our mother.

---

My dear sisters and brothers, most of us priests do not like to take the Gospel reading that you just heard because there are a whole lot of tongue-twisters in the names of the ancestors of Jesus – a difficult list of names, and we have to read all those names one after the other. It is not easy to read such a text. And yet in the liturgical year of the Church, we are given this text twice. One is in December, just as we are preparing for the birth of Jesus, and the second time we find this text in the lectionary is as we celebrate the birthday of Mary. It is the genealogy of Jesus; genealogy meaning the family tree, the ancestors who form the family tree of Jesus, and it comes right up to the time of Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom Jesus is born.

What is the significance of this long list of tongue-twisters? It is very important. Firstly, the word used in the Gospel of Matthew is 'genealogy', which is another word for 'genesis', a Greek word meaning 'the beginning of Creation'. The first book of the Bible is called Genesis, and we have, in a way the genesis of Jesus, and before that, of Joseph and Mary. The genesis means that with the coming of Jesus, from whom we obtain salvation for the world, we have a new creation. The old creation of Adam is over, and St. Paul, in fact, calls Jesus the 'new Adam', the Saviour of the world.

As we look at this list, we are given two important, significant messages. The first is that with the coming of Jesus, who is born of Mary, there is a new genesis, a new creation, which tells us that when we celebrate Christmas and when we celebrate now the birth of Mary, we are engaging in a new creation. This is something very meaningful for all of us. All of us get stale with living. We get into a rut of living. We get into the same style of living – whether it is living with sin or living with our own difficulties, we get into an old style of living. The Church reminds us that in Jesus, who is born through Mary, there is a coming of a new creation. And so, we celebrate in the birth of Jesus, and in the birth of Mary, the start of a new way of living. If we are stuck in some sort of rut, whether it is a bad habit, some form of sin, some form of staleness, God tells us that we can start again. You can begin again. Creation can begin again in your life, with Mary as our Mother and Jesus as our Saviour. And so, as we celebrate the birthday of Mary, let us also begin something new in ourselves. Let us not be the same old people as we have been in the years past. It is a chance for us to start again: Genesis, genealogy, the beginning of a new world, a new creation. That is the first message of the long list of names in the gospel.

The second thing that we notice in this long list is that there are two types of people mentioned in it. We have names like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, Solomon. These were the great leaders of the family tree of Jesus. But there were also four notorious persons in that list. Unfortunately, those four names are of women. Not to say that all the women in the family history of Jesus were bad women! But four notorious names are mentioned in that list. Names like Tamar, who got a child by cheating her father-in-law; Rahab, who was a prostitute; and two other names as well. And so, the list of Jesus' ancestry contains good people and also notorious people. This tells all of us that besides Mary and Jesus, none of us are perfect people. There is always some amount of bad and also a great amount of good. The bad things in our lives should not

discourage us from changing our lives and becoming better people. Even in the family tree of the holiest of holy people, Jesus and Mary, there were ancestors who were notorious, but also a number of good people.

In our own lives, we may sometimes focus only on what is bad, what is evil. God says: don't worry. Look into your lives. There are many lessons; there are many good qualities in you. Build on the good instead of cursing the bad in ourselves.

And so, as we celebrate the birthday of Mary, let us thank God for the new creation that is possible because of Mary and Jesus. Let us thank God because we need not be discouraged: if there is some amount of bad in ourselves, we can overcome our sinful tendencies and emphasise the good. Mary is our mother who helps us reinforce the good in our lives so that we all become new people in Jesus Christ, Amen.

---

Let us pray to our heavenly Father, asking him to make us a new creation, and that all the evil in ourselves may diminish and the good be reinforced. We pray, Our Father...

---

The parish team wishes you a very happy feast. May our Mother Mary bless each one of you, and bless our families and our homes, our communities and our parish, and our world. Happy Feast! A special greeting to the housebound who are not able to come to church.



Fr Cleophas Fernandes  
*Parish Priest, St. Pius X Church*