

Nativity of Mary

From a sermon of St. Augustine, Bishop

Dearly beloved, the day of the blessed and ever venerable Virgin Mary so long desired, is here. Let our land rejoice in the greatest exultation. Let it shine in the light of the birth of such a virgin. For she is the flower of the field, from her bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth the nature inherited from our first parents is changed. Their sin is blotted out. That unhappy curse of Eve is which it was said: In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, is, in the case of Mary, ended, for she bore the Lord in joy.

Eve mourned; Mary rejoiced. Eve carried tears in her womb, Mary, joy. Eve gave birth to the sinner, Mary to innocence. The mother of the human race brought punishment into the world; the mother of our Lord salvation. Eve was the source of sin, Mary of grace. Eve harmed by bringing death, Mary helped by giving life. The former wounded the latter healed. Obedience replaced disobedience; fidelity atones for infidelity.

Now Mary may play melodies upon the organ. Now may the active fingers of the young mother strike the timbrels. Now may choirs sing out with joy. Now let the sweetest songs mingle with the varying harmonies. Hear how she, our timbrel-player, sings: My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid, for, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He who is mighty has done great things for me. The miraculous new birth conquered the prevalent error. The canticle of Mary silenced the wailing of Eve.

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