

September 8, 2019

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

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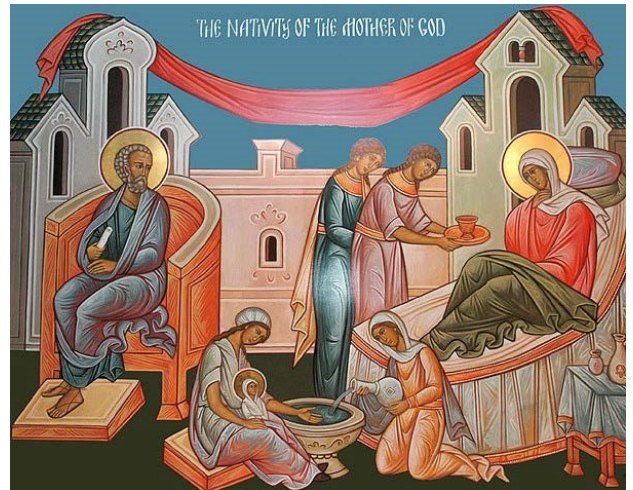
Wisdom 9:13-18

Our First Reading today starts out with a question and concludes by giving the answer. Unfortunately, for us, the answer may still leave us wondering about the original question!

*Who can know God's counsel,
or who can conceive what the Lord intends?
For the deliberations of mortals are timid,
and unsure are our plans...
...but you had given wisdom
and sent your holy spirit from on high?
And thus were the paths of those on earth made straight.*

On the one hand, we are consoled that even in our profound human weakness, God does not abandon us, and provides us with what we need. On the other hand, while the weakness is crystal clear, God's "wisdom" is often harder to see in the here and now. Yet, our Faith gives us so many examples of God's guiding light and loving care, present in countless real ways in our lives, that those who place their trust in God will truly be sustained, even in times of trouble and confusion.

Today, September 8, is also a very important day in the liturgical calendar for all Marianists. If it were not Sunday, we would be celebrating the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since the 8th Century the Church has marked this event. This is one of only two saint's "birthdays" that we celebrate liturgically, the other being that of John the Baptist. In referring to John, Jesus said "no greater man has been born of woman." Surely too, no greater woman than Mary, the Immaculate Virgin Mother of the Lord, has ever been born!



In reflecting on the infinite wisdom of God, the Divine Plan, our own inability to comprehend it, and our surrender to trust, what greater example can we have than that of Mary! We speak often of the young woman, a girl really, who was surprised and confused by an angel communicating God's unimaginable plan to her, who nevertheless responded with unqualified trust and cooperation. Today, we recall that this plan began to play out even years before, as Mary was born like no other, unstained by original sin, to be an immaculate temple through which the Lord would come into our world, be revealed as never before, and redeem us for all eternity! There is no better example of the final lines of today's first reading; Through God's infinite *wisdom*, and with the power of the *Holy Spirit sent from on high*, were the *paths of those on earth made straight*.

The real good news of today is that we don't have to be God! Let us let God be God and let us trust in the promise that we are not abandoned. At the same time, like Mary, we must be one who brings this reality of God's saving love into the world. Like Mary, we must give birth, or bring to light, Christ for our own salvation and for those whom we meet. Mary's birthday foreshadows Christ's birthday, and makes possible our birthday into eternal salvation!