

Nativity of the Lord – Divine Maternity of BVM

In the name of the Father ...

During Advent - and indeed throughout the Christmas season - we are called to reflect on the Incarnation, the eternal Word of God entering his own creation. In doing so, we are called to reflect also on the prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin who was inseparably bound up in this mystery, precisely because her consent was required for it to happen.

During Advent we have reflected on her perfect sinlessness founded on her Immaculate Conception. Yesterday, we reflected on her perpetual virginity through the experiences of the most chaste, God-fearing St Joseph, before whose eyes God unfolded the mystery accomplished in the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, that ... *a virgin shall conceive and bear a son ... virgo prius ac postérius*, a virgin before and after.

Today in particular, we are called to reflect on her divine maternity, that ultimate privilege from which all others proceed. St Matthew completes Isaiah's prophecy of the virgin bearing a son: *and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which means God with us.*¹ In the words of the *Alma Redemptoris Mater: tu quae genuisti, natura mirante, tuum sanctum genitorem* – while creation marvelled, you bore your creator.

To reflect on the Blessed Virgin's divine maternity is to ask: who is the child whom she carried in her womb for nine months, to whom she gave birth in Bethlehem and who, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lay in a manger?²

Who is her child?

In his adult life, while in a boat with his disciples during a storm, he rebuked the wind and the sea to be calm, and the wind and the sea obeyed him.³

He commanded the waves of the sea of Galilee to give him sure footing that he might walk upon them, and the waves obeyed him.⁴

He rebuked a demon which possessed a small boy to come out of him, and the demon obeyed him.⁵

And on each of these occasions, he rebuked his disciples for their lack of faith in him.

He commanded sight be restored to the eyes of the blind, and sight obeyed him.⁶

He commanded hearing be restored to the ears of the deaf, and hearing obeyed him.⁷

He commanded speech be restored to the tongues of the mute, and speech obeyed him.⁸

He commanded the dead – and most spectacularly his friend Lazarus, four days dead in the bowels of

¹ [Mt 1:22-23](#)

² [Lk 2:7](#)

³ [Mt 8:23-27](#)

⁴ [Mt 14:22-33](#); [Jn 6:16-21](#)

⁵ [Mt 17:18-21](#); [Mk 9:17-29](#)

⁶ [Mt 9:27-31](#); [20:29-34](#)

⁷ [Mk 7:33-35](#)

⁸ [Mt 9:32-33](#); [15:30-31](#)

the earth - to return to life, and the dead obeyed him.⁹

And at the close of his earthly life, he commanded bread and wine become his body and blood, and bread and wine obeyed him.

All these – the wind and waves, the demons, the dead, even bread and wine - obeyed this man, a true man but no mere man – because he who commanded now through his own human voice, was the self-same who commanded David to leave his flocks to be king of Israel, and David waveringly obeyed him.

He commanded Moses from a burning bush to bring Israel out of Egypt, and Moses reluctantly obeyed him.

He commanded Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees to become the father of many nations, and Abraham hesitatingly obeyed him.

He commanded Noah -*who found favour in the eyes of the Lord* - to build an Ark that he might be saved from the Flood, and Noah obeyed him.

And more so than his friend Lazarus four-days dead, he commanded Adam to come forth from the slime of the earth, and the not-yet-existing Adam obeyed him.

The wind and waves, the demons, the dead, even bread and wine obeyed this man, a true man but no mere man – because he who commanded now through his own human voice, was the self-same who *in the beginning was with God and was God, before anything which was created was created*.¹⁰ They obeyed because he who spoke now with his own human voice, also called forth creation out of nothing, and the not-yet-existing obeyed, as St Paul writes: *qui ... vocat quae non sunt, tamquam ea quae sunt ... he calls those things which are not, just as those which are*.¹¹ He called forth not just some primordial chaos, but - in a perfect demonstration of his omnipotence and infinite wisdom - a resplendent cosmos: and - unlike wavering, reluctant, hesitant, doubting men – the not-yet-existing cosmos obeyed him, perfectly, instantly. As St Augustine observes of creation: *... we ought not to think of these creatures at the moment they were produced as subject to the processes of nature which we now observe in them, but rather as under the wonderful and unutterable power of the Wisdom of God, who reaches from end-to-end mightily and governs all graciously*.¹² *For this power of divine Wisdom does not reach by stages nor arrive by steps ... For through Wisdom all things were made*¹³ *... He spoke and they were made, he commanded and they were created*.¹⁴ *Creation therefore did not take place slowly in order that a slow development might be implanted in those thing which are slow by nature; nor were the ages established at the plodding pace at which they now pass. Time brings about the development of these creatures*

⁹ [Mt 9:18-26](#) ([Mk 5:22-43](#); [Lk 8:41-46](#)); [Lk 7:11-15](#); [Jn 11:1-45](#)

¹⁰ [Jn 1:1-3](#)

¹¹ [Rom 4:17](#)

¹² c.f. [Wis 8:1](#)

¹³ c.f. [Ps 103\(4\):24](#)

¹⁴ c.f. [Ps 32\(3\):9](#); [148:5](#)

*according to the laws of their numbers, but there was no passage of time when they received these laws at creation.*¹⁵

All these things obeyed because he who spoke is the self-same Eternal Word who holds all things in existence, who governs all things by his providence, guiding them to their perfection, of whom the psalmist says: *Ecce non dormitabit neque dormiet qui custodit Israel ... Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*¹⁶ That is, ever vigilant, he is present always to all things which are, lest they cease to be, and to be what they are.

This is the child whom she conceived and bore in her womb, who lies wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. It was by her *fiat* that he entered into his own creation,¹⁷ he who by his own *fiat* calls and sustains all things from nothing,¹⁸ who exercises universal providence over all things which are – who neither slumbers nor sleeps – and yet for now, he does.

In the name of the Father ...

¹⁵ The creation account tells of God creating all things according to their kind. To be “a kind” is to be subject to well-defined laws, laws which are in things as inherent tendencies, and which are recognized by man as laws, and which distinguish one kind of thing from another. The development of creatures according to their laws is recognized as the passage of time. But no time lapsed when – in the very act of their creation – they received their laws.

¹⁶ [Ps 120\(121\):4](#)

¹⁷ [Lk 1:38](#)

¹⁸ [Gen 1](#)