

X Sunday after Pentecost – The Thirteenth Day

In the name of the Father...

Excepting this very month of August, indeed this very day – the thirteenth – one hundred years ago in the year 1917, while Europe was consuming itself in that *senseless slaughter*¹ which was the First World War, thought by its protagonists to be the shaping of a new world order but in fact a punishment from God on account of the sins of men, from May, the month devoted to her, to October, the month devoted to her Holy Rosary, the Mother of God appeared to three young shepherd children at Fatima in Portugal on the thirteenth day of the month.²

Is there is any significance to the thirteenth day?³ Previously – in passing – I had suggested a relation to the event which sowed the seeds of that First World War, the Protestant revolt started by Martin Luther on October 31, 1517. I would like to offer another possibility.

With the words: *The book of the generations of Jesus Christ*,⁴ St Matthew's gospel opens with a genealogy which progresses via the male line: it is a genealogy of Jewish kings. Adjunct to that genealogy, Matthew mentions several women including Tamar – who posed as a prostitute and bore sons by her father in law Judah⁵ – and the great grandmother of King David, Ruth, who was a Moabite, the Moabites being the descendants of Lot by incest with his own daughters.⁶ Matthew even shows King Solomon to be the offspring of adultery, pointedly naming his mother as *the wife of Uriah [the Hittite]*.⁷ St Matthew introduces these unsavory facts to show that the royal descent – something so precious to the Jews – was corrupt even for Kings David and Solomon, thus pre-empting any objections to Our Lord's claim to be the legitimate king on account of his being a Galilean.

Matthew divides the genealogy into three groups of fourteen, a number significant to his Hebrew audience because it is the sum of the letters spelling King David's name – the Hebrew alphabet having no vowels but only consonants which also serve as numbers. Matthew does this to draw attention to one of Our Lord's principle titles – the son of David – he being descended from David by God's promise according to the flesh.

¹ An expression attributed to the then reigning Pope, Benedict XV.

² August was an exception because the mayor of Vila Nova de Ourém abducted the children so that they could not be at the Cova da Iria on the 13th and threatened to kill them if they did not reveal the secret committed to them the previous month. The children refused to tell. They received an apparition of the Blessed Virgin on the 19th of that month.

³ [Why Our Lady Loves the Number 13](#)

⁴ [Mt 1:1](#) - Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

⁵ [Gen 38](#)

⁶ [Gen 19:30-38](#)

⁷ [Mt 1:6](#)

Of these three groups, the first set of fourteen ends: *Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.*⁸ The third set of fourteen ends: *Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.*⁹

One might first judge that Mary is mentioned in the same manner as the other women in the genealogy, as adjunct to it. This, however, is not the case. In the first set of fourteen generations, Obed is the twelfth, Jesse is the thirteenth and David is the fourteenth. In the third set of fourteen generations, Joseph is the twelfth, Mary is the thirteenth and Jesus is the fourteenth.

St Matthew thus recalls Isaiah's prophecy of the Messiah, that a branch would spring from the root of Jesse upon whom the spirit of God would rest.¹⁰ That root of Jesse is not St Joseph, whom Matthew forcefully says is not the biological father of the child, but rather is the Blessed Virgin.

More subtly, however, St Matthew also recalls a more ancient prophecy. In his genealogy, the Blessed Virgin appears without prior generations: the royal genealogy ends with Joseph who has no progeny, and another genealogy begins of only two generations: Mary and her son.

Matthew is not suggesting that – like Eve – the Blessed Virgin had no parents. Indeed, as St Jerome observes, we know of her lineage from her marriage to Joseph of the line of David, as also from God's promise that the Messiah would descend from David according to the flesh.

Rather, Matthew recalls the most ancient prophecy, the Protoevangelium, the enigmatic promise of redemption which God spoke when casting Adam and Eve out of the garden, telling the serpent: *I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed...*¹¹ Matthew's genealogy, which ends with St Joseph as the twelfth generation and begins anew with the Blessed Virgin as the thirteenth, subtly announces the long-awaited appearance of the woman and her seed.

Further, Matthew's genealogy alludes to the genealogy of Adam which Moses introduces as... *the book of the generations of Adam*,¹² wherein Adam and his progeny die because of the Fall and the propagation of Original Sin. Insofar as Matthew's genealogy parallels the genealogy in Genesis, it shows the propagation of sin and death. The break, however, at the thirteenth generation hints at God's intervention in history to prevent the Blessed Virgin from contracting Original Sin and its calamitous effects, and this on account of her divine maternity, i.e., because of her seed, her son. Thus, in this genealogy of two - the thirteenth and fourteenth generations - neither come under Satan's influence propagated by carnal generation, both conceived, rather, at enmity with the serpent, immaculate.

⁸ [Mt 1:6](#)

⁹ [Mt 1:16](#)

¹⁰ [Isa 11:1-2](#)

¹¹ [Gen 3:15](#)

¹² [Gen 5:1](#) - αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως ἀνθρώπων

Prefiguring she who was to carry God's covenant in her immaculate womb,¹³ lined with gold inside and out as a sign of purity,¹⁴ the Ark of the Covenant which God commanded Moses to make would vanquish Israel's enemies as the scriptures record: *And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, "Arise, O Lord, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you."*¹⁵ The Woman's appearance, then, as the thirteenth generation, at enmity with the serpent, as the Immaculate Conception over whom Satan never had any influence, signals the appearance of God's chosen instrument to crush Satan's head by bringing his work to naught: work which began in Eden with Eve's rebellion, escalated with Martin Luther's revolt of October 31, and reached its climax through the agency of the Russian Communists with the realization of Hell on earth. Her victory is assured: *I will put enmity between you and the woman... Arise, O Lord, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you... The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me and she shall be converted... In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.*

Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us.

In the name of the Father...

¹³ [Isa 42:6; 49:8](#)

¹⁴ [Ex 25:11](#)

¹⁵ [Num 10:35](#)