

## Tuesday Reflection 080920

Today we celebrate a birthday, one of the three great birthdays marked in the liturgical calendar. The three are of course Jesus (25th December) John the Baptist (24th June) and Mary, Mother of God (today).

Liturgically, Mary's birthday is a little problematic: today's Gospel recounts Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, in which Mary only plays a small part, and one could make a point about the patriarchal nature of the Gospel account. One could also wonder why the genealogy in Luke's Gospel is not used.

Getting tied up in theological and liturgical niceties rather misses the point, however. The important thing about Jesus, Mary and John is that their births marked the end of an old era and the beginning of a new one - John, the last of the Old Testament prophets, Mary the gateway to the new age and Jesus the manifestation of that new era.

The relative dearth of scriptural information on Mary can be a problem for those scriptural fundamentalists who have problems with tradition and the accumulated treasure-store of Church teaching.

Mary appears in a number of 'cameo' roles (except for Jesus' nativity of course), but there is one phrase I should like to pick out, as it sums up for me her whole approach: "But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19) For me, this marks Mary as a true contemplative; I am sure that Mary prayed, but hers was a silent prayer, and in this she sets an example which can be an inspiration to us all.

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