

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Sep 8th 2018**

### **Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

It seems that across the United States exploring one's genealogy has become very popular. There are testing kits for purchase to analyze the science of the ancestry of an individual. The results of these tests are helping people better understand their heritage. And sometimes the results of the tests can clarify or redefine the understanding of family.

The story of our birth can be such a powerful window into our own identity. And stories of our heritage can ground us in larger community. Sadly heritage can be used to divide and separate communities and families.

Today we celebrate the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her birth has profound impact on our lives as Christians. Mary made the ultimate leap of faith and gave us the gift of the birth of Jesus. She embodies the line in today's reading from Romans: We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

The story of the birth of Jesus draws us together as Christians. Today's readings do not directly address the birth of Mary. I am left wondering about her birth. I wonder about the emotions felt by her parents Joachim and Anne. How did her community react to her birth?

This curiosity opens my heart to the stories of people I encounter in my life and to my identity as a Catholic. What efforts can I make to slow down and deeply listen to the story of another? How can I help celebrate the heritage of those in my community? How does my story inform how I serve others? What courage must I summon to make a leap of faith when I hear the call of God?

The Gospel from Matthew reminds us: Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son and they shall name him Emmanuel which means "God is with us."

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