

# Our Lady's Birthday

On Wednesday, September 8, we celebrate the feast of the Birthday of Our Lady. What a beautiful time of the year in Australia for a beautiful feast. Pope Paul



VI wrote in his *Marialis Cultus* in 1972 that Mary's birthday was considered the "dawn of our salvation" and cause of great joy.

The earliest document commemorating this feast comes from the sixth century. The (Eastern Roman) imperial civil year began in Constantinople on September 1. It is generally believed that the date of September 8 was chosen by Christian leaders to celebrate the Nativity of Mary since Mary's birth was symbolic of the "beginning" of the work of

salvation. The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was later fixed at December 8, nine months prior to that.

The feast of Mary's Nativity was introduced in Rome by (Eastern born) Pope Sergius I (687-701), who, incidentally, in his youth was the first person to be officially documented as a singer (*priori cantorum* - leader or first singer) in the Roman *schola cantorum*.

## THE HYMN

The birthday hymn attached has been handed down to us from the sisters of the earliest Mount Street choir, and was copied here from the *2016 Josephite Heritage Collection* produced by Sr Margaret Kealy and myself for the Sesquicentenary. The melody and accompaniment were found in one of the hymnaries of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (Cincinnati). Important in another of their hymn books was our own "Great St Joseph, throned in glory" – an album dated 1883, a year when Mother Mary and the sisters were settling into various parts of Sydney. They would have purchased that album then. So, like the one to St Joseph, the Birthday hymn is quite important to our history and tradition.

Apologies for the deficiencies in the personal voice recording.

A very happy feast to everyone.

Marie Therese Levey

# OUR LADY'S BIRTHDAY

September 8. Cf. Song of Songs 2:8

**1.** Who is this com-eth o - ver the moun-tains fair and sweet as the morn-ing light.  
**2.** An - gels clus - ter a - round thy cra - dle. Smil - ing in - to thy lit - tle face.  
**3.** Bless us all with thy birth - day - bless - ing As we gath - er a - round thy throne.

**5** Shed - ding pure and beau - ti - ful rad - iance O'er the earth that is wrapt in light.  
Whis - p'ring now as they whis - pered lat - er "The Lord is with thee O full of grace."  
Lay thy hand with a ten - der - pres - sure On this home which is all thine own.

**9** Now the day spring in - deed is nigh. The Morn - ing Star hath ris - en on high.  
We too Mar - y would hail thee thus. More than to ang - els thou art to us.  
While we are here and when we are far - Light up our way dear Morn - ing Star

**13** *B $\flat$  Refrain* How shall we wel - come thee beau - ti - ful moth - er? How shall we greet thee

**19** new - ly born! Joy to thee! Praise to thee! Love to thee!

**24** Thanks to thee! Hail to thy ris - ing sweet Star of the Morn!