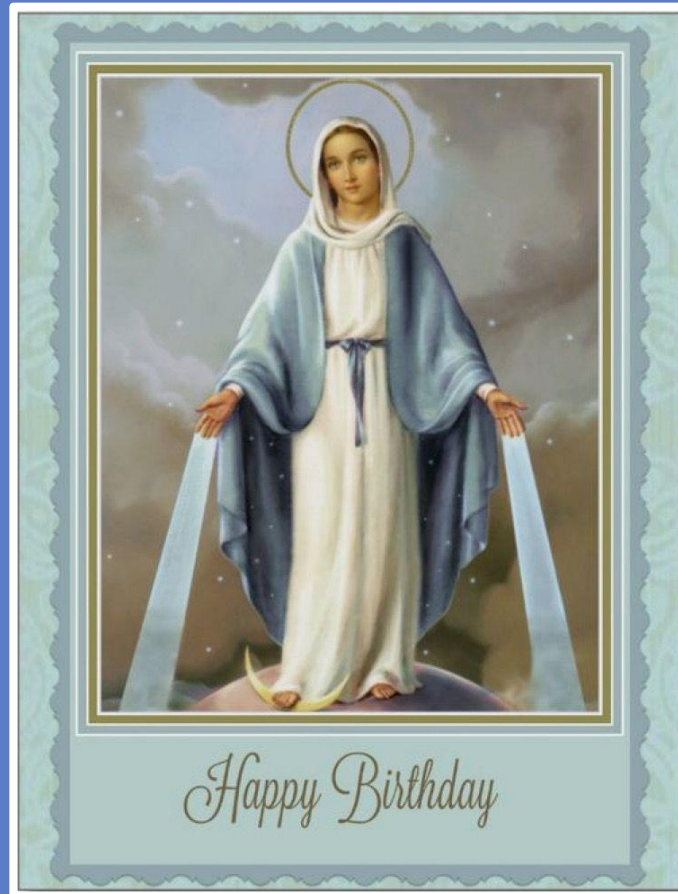


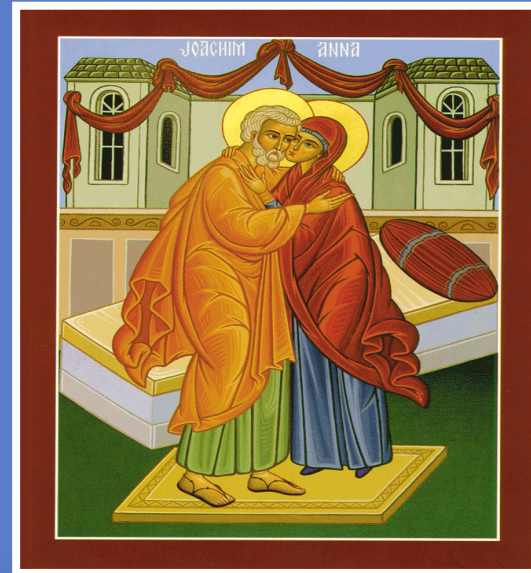
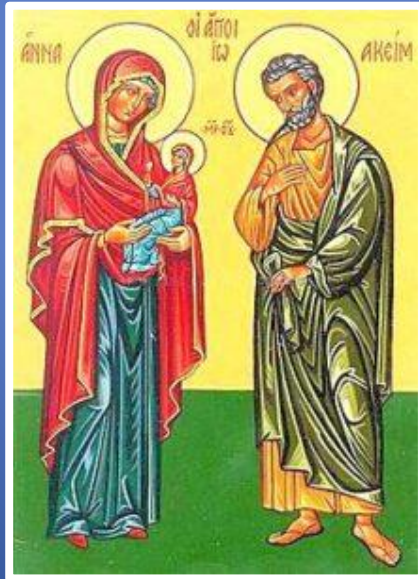
Our Lady's Birthday



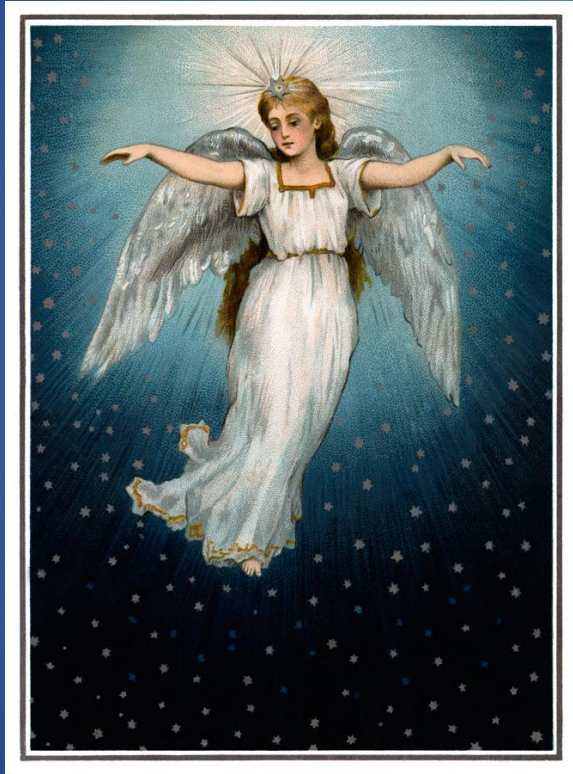
8th September

Mary's Parents

According to tradition Mary's parents were Joachim and Anne who were also Saints. They lived in Nazareth.



God answers their prayers.



Joachim and Anne prayed to God and had much faith. An angel appeared to both of them and Anne was soon expecting a child who would be called Mary, which means loved by God.

The Immaculate Conception

We celebrate this feast day on December 8th. This means that from the moment of her existence in Anne's womb, Mary was free from sin. She was "immaculate". She never sinned in her life!



The Immaculate Conception

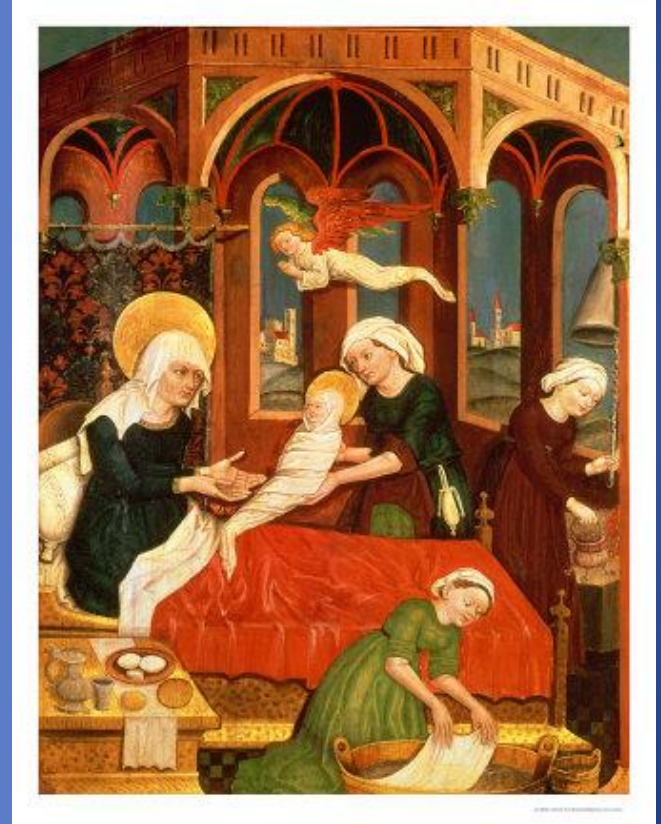
God kept Mary free from sin because she was to have the privilege of carrying His Son Jesus in her womb later in her life.

(When Our Lady appeared to Bernadette at Lourdes in 1858 she told Bernadette that she was the “Immaculate Conception”).



The Birth of Mary

Exactly nine months after the Immaculate Conception we celebrate the birth of Mary on September 8th.



Celebrations of Our Lady's birthday today

The winegrowers in France called this feast "Our Lady of the Grape Harvest". The best grapes are brought to the local church to be blessed and then some bunches are attached to hands of the statue of Mary. A festive meal which includes the new grapes is part of this day.



Celebrations of Our Lady's birthday today

In some parts of Austria, milk from this day and all the leftover food are given to the poor in honour of Our Lady's Nativity.



In Italy there are devotions to "Maria Bambina" (baby Mary) on September 8th and often a Novena of prayers (for 9 days) is prayed.

Happy birthday to Our Lady!

Here are some suggestions as to how we can say "Happy Birthday" to Our Lady:

- Go to our Prayer Garden
- Pray a decade of the Rosary
- Pray the Angelus
- Visit a shrine to Our Lady
- Sing a hymn e.g. "Hail Mary"
"As I Kneel before You"
- Decorate your sacred space with a statue or picture of Mary and some flowers

