

**Homily – Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Centennial of Sacred Heart Conventual Chapel – September 8, 2023**

What a joy to come and celebrate the centennial of this wonderful chapel, and the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary! Thank you, sisters! Celebrating a milestone like this puts time in perspective. Our day-to-day is inevitably bound by the dynamic of measuring hours and minutes. The Greeks called that dimension of time “chronos.” But when we think about one hundred years, *chronos* is no longer as relevant. Then we begin to consider what they called “kairos,” the qualitative dimension of time. We pursue and eventually contemplate, truth, goodness, and beauty, when we can see our *chronos* from the viewpoint of our *kairos*. In the New Testament, *kairos* is God’s time, or God’s moment to act in our lives. Our anguish and anxiety are vanished when we enter that dimension, for us to find true peace and joy.

In the first reading, Micah presents Mary to us as the one who is to give birth. Without knowing it, the prophet is announcing the greatest title of Mary: Mother of God. In preparation for the fullness of time – when God’s time becomes our time – she is already elevated since her Immaculate Conception to be called blessed by all generations. Today we celebrate the fulfillment of Divine Providence for humanity beginning to glimpse the light of this world. Our time begins to be widened to God’s eternity.

The prophet describes Bethlehem-Ephrathah as too small for any fruit to be expected from it. It is like a small tree in the winter, which has lost all its leaves and appears to be dead. But life is brewing within it, secretly. It has strong roots. A new spring is about to come. Then he talks about the shepherd-king who will gather all the children and make them live in peace. He himself shall be our peace.

Just as Mary was intended by God to be the Mother of Divine Providence, you as spiritual mothers have been called to carry Him within you and to deliver Him to the world. The beauty of this chapel is enhanced by its history. Its aesthetic ratios can be a good analogy for the perfect proportions intended by Divine Providence in the most beautiful reality this world has ever seen: the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. “In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Gn 1:27).

God needed help from no one to come into this world. However, He chose to be adorned by the roles of Mary, his Mother, and Joseph, the head of his household; each one in their right place and proportion. From our viewpoint, we can ignore neither of them, to be able to host Jesus in our hearts and announce Him to the world. With the help of both Mary and Joseph, the Holy Spirit begets the prince of Peace in us and through us. No true devotion to Mary can grow and endure with indifference to Joseph.

The evangelist clearly sets out how Mary begot Jesus and why we say of him that he is the son of David, thanks to Joseph’s lineage. One generation after another, with the patience of a goldsmith as Pope Francis would say, God bears the ancestry of his Son-made-man in human history. The Lord’s earthly roots indicate that his inheritance extends to the ends of the universe, which this ceiling evokes. Aware of the depth of the roots of our faith, how can we reach out farther to spread our vital devotions to Mary and Joseph? Do you rejoice in your devotions to Mary and Joseph? How can we imitate both their “YES” to the work of the Holy Spirit, for their union to be fruitful in us?

May the Marian pastoral ministry be renewed at OLLU, as she is the source of life for the mission. And may Our Lady of Guadalupe nourish us from the root, for the fruits of peace and joy to grow from within our hearts.