

herds entrusted with the care of his flocks, Anne to her gardens, to pour forth, each one separately, their soul before the Lord, and to ask relief in their affliction. After several days of a retreat during which they attained the most sublime abandonment of self to the heavenly will, the Almighty, touched by their pious tears, sent them a consoler. An angel came in his name to announce unto them the cessation of the shame which weighed upon them. The divine messenger first showed himself to Joachim; he promised him that Anne would soon conceive an incomparable virgin, the future mother of the Messiah promised for so many ages. In her turn, the holy spouse received the same revelation, and each, filled with interior confidence, communicated to the other those happy tidings with joyous eagerness, and hastened, by fervent thanksgiving, to prove to God their gratitude for so great a benefit.

A few days later, on the 8th of December, the Blessed Anne conceived a daughter free from the original stain, Mary Immaculate, who, nine months after, amid the joy of her parents and all the neighboring inhabitants, was born at Nazareth, on the 8th of September, in the house of St. Joachim. By an order from heaven, they gave her the name of Mary, whose meaning was in harmony with her future destinies. Eighty days later, Anne with her beloved daughter repaired to the Temple to accomplish the legal purification and make the accustomed offerings.

When Mary had reached her third year, her parents, faithful to their vow, led her again to the Temple, and notwithstanding the sorrows of a cruel separation, generously offered to the Lord their child, joy of their old age, reward of their holiness. It is probable that they did not live long after this last sacrifice. They died consoled and full of merits, happy to announce to their forefathers the coming advent of the Messiah.