

An Advent Hymn to Mary & for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Dec 8th)

The following text goes to the melody of the Gospel chant for the 4th Week of Advent 'A Virgin will Conceive'. (From my album, Sing Spirit, Sing Life Chant No 3). This version adds further verses to the original text.

1. A virgin will conceive and bring forth a Son
Emmanuel, God is with us.
Emmanuel, God is with us.
A maiden is with child and we are set free.

2. Though mother true, you first conceived in your heart. *
You saw God's way of loving,
You wondered at his coming,
And gladly you cried out in praise of your God.

3. We humbly show to all your Marian face. **
Through quiet service giving,
Through joyful Gospel – living,
Through word and deed, mere water turned into wine.

4. And so we make a place for you in our heart.
In silent contemplation,
In prayer and meditation
We treasure all these things and ponder with love.

5. Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you.
So blest among all women,
So fruitful in your loving,
The hand-maid of the Lord, so open to Life.

* It was St Augustine who in praise of Mary's faith, said that her greatness lay first in conceiving in her heart before she did so in her body. (Saint Augustine of Hippo: Sermo 25, 7-8: PL 46, 937-938)

** Marists hope to offer our Church a truly Marian face. Very briefly, this simply means a Church in spirit of Mary and one reflecting:

- Loving, simple service and presence
- Greater shared communion and one less hierarchical and clericalized
- A church more open to the Holy Spirit
- More inculturated and less centralized
- A church offering hope and inclusion to all
- With Mary, believing 'all things are possible in him who strengthens me'.
- In short, reflecting all the characteristics of what is best in human family life.