American and British music is filled with singers and songwriters reflecting on their destiny. George M. Cohan proclaimed that because he was born on the Fourth of July, that meant he just had to be a “Yankee Doodle Dandy”. In the sixties, the band Steppenwolf sang of being “Born To Be Wild” while in the eighties, the Boss, Bruce Springsteen chased fame and fortune because he was “Born To Run”. More recently, the overnight singing sensation from Britain, Susan Boyd, sang of “Who I Was Born To Be”.

Here in Millbury, Deacon Ron and I preside at a great number of funerals and so we hear many, many eulogies. Often a relative remembers the one who has passed as being born to be something: born to be a father; born to be an athlete; born to be a teacher; born to be a hero; born to be a Mom.

Fittingly then, Holy Mother Church begins each New Year of Our Lord with a celebration that honors Mary, our Blessed Lady, as the Mother of God. Mary was born to be a Mother. Gabriel, the angel from heaven announced this: “Hail, favored one … the Lord is with you … you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you will name him Jesus … and … the Child to be born will be holy … he will be called Son of God.”

It was Mary as Mother who accompanied her Son to the wedding in Cana. “Son, they have no more wine.” “Woman, how does this concern of yours involve me? My hour is not yet come.” It is the Mother who
inaugurates the ministry of the Son, the Mother who winds the clock to begin His “hour”, the Mother who becomes the first and best disciple, “Do whatever he tells you.”

It was Mary who stood at the foot of the cross, her motherly sorrowful station keeping, who became Mother of the Beloved Disciple and Mother to all who would be born again of water and the Spirit, “Son, behold your Mother; Mother behold your son.”

It was Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit from her conception, filled with the Holy Spirit at her Son’s Incarnation, now in the midst of the Church, was filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and became Mother of all the baptized in the Church, always showing them and us her Son.

Mary was born to be a Mother: Mother to the Son of God; Mother to the human race as the new Eve; Mother to the disciples of her blessed Son; Mother to the Church; Mother who always guides us to her Son; Mother who would give anything, do anything for her Son … “Do whatever He tells you.”

And so, as I cross the threshold of a new year, my Brother and Lord Jesus brings me to our Blessed Mother that she might take care of me as I walk life’s journey:

“Mother dear, O pray for me!

While far from heav’n and thee

I wander in a fragile bark

O’er life’s tempestuous sea.

O Virgin Mother, from your throne,

While far from heav’n and thee

I wander in a fragile bark

O’er life’s tempestuous sea.

O Virgin Mother, from your throne,
So bright in bliss above,
Protect your child and cheer my path
With your sweet smile of love.
Mother dear, remember me,
And never cease your care,
Till in heaven eternally,
Your love and bliss I share.”