

Immaculate Conception

Feast Day: December 8

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.

Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus* (8.12.1854): DS 2803



The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

A **Dogma** is “a truth appertaining to faith or morals, revealed by God, transmitted from the Apostles in the Scriptures or by tradition, and proposed by the Church for the acceptance of the faithful.”

On **December 8, 1854**, **Pope Pius IX** defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in the document ***Ineffabilis Deus***:

“... the most Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin ...”

Dogmas are truths of the Catholic faith that are objectively true, finding their ultimate source in God’s revelation. They are doctrines of the Catholic faith that the faithful are exhorted to believe and assent to, such as the dogma that Christ is the head of the Church or that God is a unity of three persons. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a book that contains all of the dogmas of the Catholic Church.

The Immaculate Conception was a frequent topic in the homilies and writings of Saint Stanislaus Papczynski, the Founder of the Marians — and this was some two centuries before the dogma would be proclaimed by the Church. He wrote: “I believe everything that the holy Roman Church believes ... but first of all I profess that the Most Holy Mother of God, Mary, was spotless from original sin, from the moment of her conception. Saint Stanislaus recognized that Mary’s redemption was the very masterpiece of God’s merciful plan for the world. Among all human beings, she alone received the benefits of salvation in Christ from the very moment of her conception — a unique privilege derived from God having chosen her as Mother of the Saviour.

Saints can tell us a lot about the privileges of Our Lady and how to prepare for their liturgical celebration. For example, Saint Faustina referred to the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady twelve times in her *Diary and prepared for the liturgical celebration of this Solemnity on December 8th sometimes months in advance. The Immaculate Conception was for St Faustina a model and mirror upon which she desired to pattern herself.*

These passages offer great insights into St Faustina’s strong desire for purity, and they can help us, too, in our desire for purity.

From early morning, I felt the nearness of the Blessed Mother. During Holy Mass, I saw Her, so lovely and so beautiful that I have no words to express even a small part of this beauty. She was all [in] white, with a blue sash around Her waist. Her cloak was also blue, and there was a crown on Her head. Marvellous light streamed forth from Her whole figure. 'I am Queen of heaven and earth, but especially the Mother of your [Congregation]'. She pressed me to Her heart and said, I feel constant compassion for you. I felt the force of Her Immaculate Heart which was communicated to my soul. Now I understand why I have been preparing for this feast for two months and have been looking forward to it with such yearning. From today onwards, I am going to strive for the greatest purity of soul, that the rays of God's grace may be reflected in all their brilliance. I long to be a crystal in order to find favour in His eyes. (Diary of St. Faustina 805)

It is with great zeal that I have prepared for the celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. I have made an extra effort to keep recollected in spirit and have meditated on that unique privilege of Our Lady. And thus my heart was completely drowned in Her, thanking God for having accorded this great privilege to Mary. (Diary of St. Faustina 1412)

'I desire, My dearly beloved daughter, that you practice the three virtues that are dearest to Me – and most pleasing to God. The first is humility, humility, humility, and once again humility; the second virtue, purity; the third virtue, love of God. As My daughter, you must especially radiate with these virtues'. When the conversation ended, She pressed me to Her heart and disappeared. When I regained the use of my sense, my heart became so wonder fully attracted to these virtues; and I practice them faithfully. They are as though engraved in my heart. (Diary of St. Faustina 1415)

PRAYER TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



O most holy Virgin who found favour in God's sight that you became His Mother;
O Virgin, immaculate in body and soul, in your faith and in your love, look down with pity on us miserable sinners, who in our need seek your powerful protection.
The evil serpent on whom was cast the ancient curse continues, alas, to attack and ensnare the poor children of Eve. But you, our Blessed Mother, our Queen and our Advocate, you who from the first instant of your conception had crushed the head of this cruel enemy, receive our prayers. United to you with one heart, we implore you to present them before the throne of God. May we never be caught in the snares around us of the evil one, but rather may we all reach the harbor of salvation. Despite the awesome perils which threaten, may God's Church and all Christian society sing out once again the hymn of deliverance, of victory and of peace. Amen.
(by St. Pius X)