

are, appeared before Him in the garden of Eden. In the anathema which fell upon the serpent, there was included a promise of mercy to us. 'I will put enmities,' said the Lord, 'between thee and the Woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head' (Gen. iii. 15). Thus was salvation promised the human race under the form of a victory over Satan; and this victory is to be gained by the Woman, and she will gain it for us also... Raise up your heads, ye children of Adam, and shake off your chains! This day the humiliation which weighed you down is annihilated. Mary, who is of the same flesh and blood as yourselves, has seen the torrent of sin, which swept along all the generations of mankind, flow back at her presence and not touch her...

This truth of Mary's Immaculate Conception--which was revealed to the Apostles by the Divine Son of Mary, inherited by the Church, taught by the holy fathers, believed by each generation of the Christian people with an ever increasing explicitness-- was implied in the very notion of a Mother of God... on whom this sublime dignity was conferred... The Symbol of our faith has therefore received not a new truth, but a new light on a truth which was previously the object of the universal belief. On that great day of the definition, the infernal serpent was again crushed beneath the victorious foot of the Virgin-Mother, and the Lord graciously gave us the strongest pledge of His mercy. He still loves this guilty earth, since He has deigned to enlighten it with one of the brightest rays of His Mother's glory...



The Church, even before the solemn proclamation of the grand dogma, kept the Feast on this eighth day of December; which was, in reality, a profession of her faith... It was known as the *Conception of Mary*. As Saints Bernard and Thomas teach, the

Church cannot celebrate a Feast of what is not holy; the Conception of Mary was holy and immaculate, since the Church has for ages past honored it with a special Feast... If at the first moment of Mary's existence had been one of sin, it could never have been made the subject of the reverence of the Church... *(excerpted from: www.catholictradition.org)

The Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary

Feast Day: December 8th



*The Blessed Virgin Mary in the
womb of her mother Saint Anne*

The Immaculate Conception

*The Feast of the blessed Virgin's Immaculate conception is the most solemn of all those which the Church celebrates during the holy time of Advent; and if the first part of the cycle had to offer us the commemoration of some one of the mysteries of Mary, there was none whose object could better harmonize with the spirit of the Church in this mystic season of expectation. Let us, then, celebrate this solemnity with joy; for the Conception of Mary tells us that the Birth of Jesus is not far off.

The intention of the Church, in this Feast, is not only to celebrate the anniversary of the happy moment in which began the life of the ever-glorious Virgin Mary; but also to honor the sublime privilege, by which Mary was preserved from the Original Stain, which, by a sovereign and universal decree, is contracted by all the children of Adam the very moment they are conceived in their mother's womb. The faith of the Catholic Church on the subject of the Conception of Mary is this: that at the very instant when God united the soul of Mary, which He had created, to the body which it was to animate, this ever-blessed soul did not only not contract the stain, but was also filled with an immeasurable grace which rendered her, from that moment, the mirror of the sanctity of God Himself, as far as this is possible to a creature. The Church with her infallible authority, declared, by the lips of Pius IX, that this article of her faith had been revealed by God Himself. The Definition was received with enthusiasm by the whole of Christendom, and the eight of December of the year 1854 was thus made one of the most memorable days of the Church's history.

It was due to His Own infinite sanctity that God should suspend, in this instance, the law which His Divine justice had passed upon all the children of Adam. The relations which Mary was to bear to the Divinity, could not be reconciled with her undergoing the humiliation of this punishment. She was not only daughter of the eternal Father; she was destined also to become the very Mother of the Son, and the veritable bride of the Holy Ghost.

Nothing defiled could be permitted to enter, even for an instant of time, into the creature that was thus predestined to contract such

close relations with the adorable Trinity; not a speck could be permitted to tarnish in Mary that perfect purity which the infinitely holy God requires even in those who are one day to be admitted to enjoy the sight of His Divine majesty in Heaven; as the great Doctor Saint Anselm says, "since God the Father was to give her, as her Child, that only-begotten Son, Whom He loved as Himself...that the self-same Son of God was, by nature, the Son of both God the Father and this blessed Virgin. This same Son chose her to be substantially His Mother; and the Holy Ghost willed that in her womb He would operate the conception and birth of Him from Whom He Himself proceeded".

The close ties which were to unite the Son of God with Mary... had been present to the Divine thought from all eternity... Mary's honor was infinitely dear to Him, because she was to be His Mother, chosen to be so by His eternal and merciful decrees...She, willingly submitted to whatever the rest of God's creatures had brought on themselves, and obeyed every tittle of those laws which were never meant for her: but that humiliating barrier, which confronts every child of Adam at the first moment of his existence, and keeps him from light and grace until he shall have been regenerated by a new birth-- this could not be permitted to stand in Mary's way, her Son forbade it.

The eternal father would not do less for the second Eve than He had done for the first, who was created, as was also the first Adam, in the state of original justice, which she afterwards forfeited by sin. The Son of God would not permit that the woman from whom He was to take the nature of Man, should be deprived of that gift which He had given to her who was the mother of sin. The Holy Ghost, Who was to overshadow Mary and produce Jesus within her by His Divine operation, would not permit that foul stain, in which we are all conceived, to rest, even for an instant, on this His Bride... God Who is the author of that Law, God Who was free to make it as He willed, had power to exclude from it her whom He had predestined to be His Own in so many ways; He could exempt her, and it was just that He should exempt her; therefore, He did it. This grand exemption which God Himself foretold, when the guilty pair, whose children we all