

## Reflection Tuesday Advent Week 2 The Immaculate Conception 2020

One of the most wonderful characteristics of God is that nothing in God's plans for us will happen unless we agree to work with him. We are never forced to say yes but we are given everything we need to respond positively to his invitation. So, to help Mary respond to Gabriel with her Yes, she was conceived without sin. What can be difficult for us is to believe that in being baptised we too become exactly like Mary at her conception – free from all sin. As St Paul wrote to the Ephesians: *“Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence.”* We will never really know what inner struggles Mary faced throughout her life until we meet her in heaven, but she had complete trust in God whom she loved with all her heart. What Mary teaches us is that every time we say yes to what God asks of us, it will always be for the benefit of the whole of humankind.

**Pope Francis:** “You, Mother, remind us that we are sinners but we are no longer slaves to sin. Mary is a mother who never stops loving her children. And in the darkest night and in the darkest souls, she can reflect the light of Christ, who alone “breaks the chains of evil, liberates from the strongest dependencies, dissolves the most criminal bonds, softens the most hardened hearts. God always wanted Mary to be “full of grace, that is, full of his love.” When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would bear God's son, she “didn't lose herself in all sorts of arguments, she immediately put her whole being and her whole personal story at God's disposition. Corresponding perfectly to God's plan for her, Mary became the ‘all beautiful,’ ‘all holy,’ but without the slightest shadow of self-satisfaction. She is a masterpiece, but remains humble, small, poor. In her is reflected the beauty of God who is all love, grace and self-giving. May Mary help us make our whole lives a ‘yes’ to God, a ‘yes’ comprised of adoration of him and daily gestures of love and service to those in need.

Mary, continue to watch over this church and this parish and all who worship here. Keep us true, Mary, as you were, in fulfilling God's will that Christ be born anew within us as he was in you.

Parent to child: If you fall out of that tree and break your legs, don't come running to me!

Daughter: Mom, what's it like to have the greatest daughter in the world?

Mom: I don't know. You'll have to ask grandma.