

Reflection Thursday 2nd Week Advent the Immaculate Conception. 2022

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception states that the Virgin Mary was conceived without *original sin*. It was this grace that helped Mary give a true and considered “Yes” to the request, by the Angel Gabriel, asking her to become the mother of the incarnate God.

This is a Marian doctrine that Islam shares with the Catholic Church, although the theological details are very different. In a famous *Hadith* attributed to the Prophet, it states: “Every child is touched by the devil as soon as he is born and this contact makes him cry. Excepted are Mary and her Son.” From this *Hadith* and from verses 35-37 of Sura III, Moslem commentators have deduced and affirmed the principle of Mary’s original purity.’

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was almost universally believed over the centuries but was only formally defined as a doctrine of the Church by Pope Pius IX in 1854.

This is a great feast for our Parish as Mary Immaculate is our patron. It reminds us that, although born under the influence of Original Sin, in baptism we received the same graces Mary did at her birth and therefore we have the same help to respond to whatever God may ask of us. Like Mary we want to give birth to Christ within us so as to bring Christ to the world just as Mary did. Knowing that Jesus will soon renew his presence in our lives, in our families and in our parish at Christmas; this is a most special time of preparation.

Let Mary's soul be in each of you to proclaim the greatness of the Lord. Let her spirit be in each to rejoice in the Lord.

Christ has only one mother in the flesh, but we all bring forth Christ in faith. Every soul receives the Word of God if only it keeps chaste, remaining pure and free from sin, its modesty undefiled. The soul that succeeds in this proclaims the greatness of the Lord, just as Mary's soul magnified the Lord and her spirit rejoiced in God her Savior. In another place we read: Magnify the Lord with me. The Lord is magnified, not because the human voice can add anything to God but because he is magnified within us. Christ is the image of God, and if the soul does what is right and holy, it magnifies that image of God, in whose likeness it was created and, in magnifying the image of God, the soul has a share in its greatness and is exalted. St Ambrose