

Reflection Friday 1st Week Advent The Immaculate Conception 2023

A great feast and a great day to celebrate the Patron of our Parish. Alleluia! Alleluia!

In 1854, Pius IX solemnly proclaimed that: *“The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God, through all the merits, goodness and love of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the whole human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.”*

Our founder Emmanuel d’Alzon who had tremendous love for Mary as a patron of the Assumptionists, wrote: *Behold God’s wonderful providential plan! A woman had been the first to be attacked; by an act of incomparable grace, a woman would be first to be preserved from all stain. A woman would be raised to the unique privilege of sinless beauty. “You are all beautiful, my beloved, and there is no blemish in you” (Song 4:7) cries the heavenly spouse of virgins.*

Absolute destruction of sin, no stain, not even a shadow of sin in Mary. All is beauty, all is perfection, all is light. And it is in this beauty, O God, that she will proceed, like her Son, with your comeliness and your beauty set out, continue prosperously and reign (Ps 44:5). She is to be queen of all queens and the queen of virgins.

Today’s Gospel explains why God created Mary to be free from sin. It was so that Mary would be prepared and made able to bear the Son of God in her womb. *‘Rejoice, so highly favoured one! The Lord is with you.’* the Angel Gabriel greeted her. He then explained to her how the Holy Spirit would come upon her and she would conceive. And she responded with those age-old words that we seek to emulate whenever God calls us: *‘I am the handmaid of the Lord,’* said Mary *‘let what you have said be done to me.’* Mary was full of grace and full of God. The Father chose her, the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the Son was literally within her. We look to her as a model of holiness and ask for her intercession as we know how close her heart is to God’s. Mary Immaculate, pray for us!

St Augustine of Hippo:

O blessed Virgin Mary, who can worthily repay you with just dues of praise and thanksgiving, you who by the wondrous assent of your will rescued a fallen world? What songs of praise can our weak human nature recite in your honour, since it is by your intervention alone that it has found the way to restoration? We thank you and ask your blessings on us and on our parish that like Mary we too fulfil your will for the coming of the kingdom. Amen

Our Lady Immaculate. Pray for us.

Our Lady of the Assumption. Pray for us