



Catechetical Corner

“BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN”

An essential part of God’s plan for the mother of his Son was that she be conceived free from Original Sin. “Through the centuries the Church became ever more aware that Mary, ‘full of grace’ through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception” (CCC, no. 491).

In anticipation that she was to bear the Son of God, Mary was preserved from the time of her conception from Original Sin. We call this the Immaculate Conception. No sin would touch her, so that she would be a fitting and worthy vessel of the Son of God. The Immaculate Conception does not refer to the virginal conception and birth of Christ, but rather to Mary’s being conceived without inheriting Original Sin.

In the course of time, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception became more precisely enunciated, as its truth—long supported by the universal popular devotion of the faithful—was better understood by deepening theological inquiry. In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed this dogma infallibly: that is, in his role as supreme teacher of the Church, he declared that this doctrine is divinely revealed and must be accepted with faith by the entire Church.



“O MARY, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”

Immaculate Conception, Placido Costanzi, The J. Paul Getty Museum

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known that anyone
who fled to your protection,
implored your help or sought your
intercession was left unaided.
Inspired with this confidence, we fly unto you,
O Virgin of Virgins, our Mother.
To you we come. Before you we kneel,
sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not our petitions,
but in your clemency, hear and answer them. Amen.
—St. Bernard of Clairvaux