

HOMILY IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Today's Gospel can be very misleading as we are celebrating Mary's Immaculate Conception, not Jesus. Especially since in around 16 days we will be celebrating Jesus birth! No wonder there are some who are still confused about the meaning of this feast day, the Immaculate Conception.

It is our celebration of Our Lady's conception free from original sin and then her birth 9 months later on September 8th. Then we celebrate the conception of Jesus on March 25th in the Annunciation of his birth to Mary and then we celebrate his birth 9 months later on December 25th.

We believe, God who had planned that his Son would become flesh and dwell among us, planned that an Immaculate Mother should give birth to Jesus.

We are all born with original sin. In our Baptism we are washed clean of our original sin. Today we honor Our Lady because she was conceived free from original sin

Although it was only on Dec 8th 1854 that Pope Pius IX solemnly declared that Our Lady was conceived free from original sin and that this was then a dogma of faith to be believed by all the faithful. When Our Lady appeared in Lourdes four

years later in 1858 she said to St. Bernadette, “I am the Immaculate Conception” confirming the Pope’s decision to declare the dogma of our faith in the Immaculate Conception.

Yes, we do believe Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception was a special grace given to Our Lady in advance because of her Son Jesus.

We believe the Conception of Jesus could only dwell in a Woman born free of original sin!

We look on the purity of Mary with admiration, because she was the first believer in Jesus, because She was the first Christian.

In our first reading we heard about Eve leading Adam into sin. So Mary is the New Eve because at the Annunciation and all through her life Mary restored the relationship broken by the first Eve. She is the New Eve because **she** is the mother of all those born into new life through the grace in Christ.

Remember, Mary, like us had to struggle with what it means to be a follower of Jesus. In the temple Simeon predicted that a sword of sorrow would pierce her soul (Luke 2:35). When Jesus was lost, she had to learn that Jesus’ heavenly Father comes first (Luke 2:49). Mary too had to take up her cross after Jesus even though she was immaculate.

Mary is special to Jesus, so we can and should pray to Mary to intercede for us on our journey of life.

So Today we celebrate in honor of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception and not just because of this special grace given to her and not just because she is special to Jesus, but also because we can regard Mary in a special way our Heavenly mother,

a mother whom we can love and who loves us, a mother to whom we can tell everything, a mother who wants what is best for us.

Many of you probably many of you don't remember the Xenia tornado that came through there in 1974. Many people and businesses lost all they had. I remember the Arrowhead subdivision was pretty much flattened.

My neighbor and I visited a family member who lived in the Arrowhead subdivision, his whose house was demolished except one wall. A wall that held a statue of Mary was still standing untouched.

I have heard of several stories like that, but none this close to home. None that I actually witness!

It just shows how special Mary must have been to that family and how she was telling them everything will be all right. Your faith in me and my Son will see you through this!

There has been many signs, such as Lourdes, Fatima and there is told of a shrine in Carey Ohio where she was supposed to have appeared and I've been told there has also been many healing there.

Our challenge today, can we live a life of strong faith and holiness like Mary?

The answer is,--Yes if we turn to Mary our Heavenly Mother to intercede for us to her Son. Remembering our Heavenly Father loves us so much that He gives us Mary as our Heavenly Mother.

She told the children at Fatima to pray the rosary. She also wants us to pray the rosary for world peace.

As we all know, more than ever our world needs our Heavenly Mother, the one conceived without sin to intercede for us to her Son.

Join me in that prayer that honors Mary that all Catholic know and believe:” The Hail Mary”

Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen!