

St. John's Newsletter



Hail Mary Full of Grace

December 8 marks the *Feast of the Immaculate Conception* in the Catholic Church. The Church uses the word "Feast" to describe a day of commemoration in which we remember and ponder events of particular significance in salvation history.

The teaching of the Immaculate Conception proclaims that Mary was free of original sin from the moment of *her* conception in *her* mother's womb and free of all personal sin throughout her life. This allowed Mary to be the spotless vessel that received and carried the perfect and divine Son of God. This sinless state recalls our original existence in the Garden of Eden and foreshadows eternal life in God's kingdom. Just as Eve symbolizes our fallen human nature, Mary symbolizes the redeemed nature of the saints in heaven. For this reason the Church refers to her as the "new Eve."

Standing outside of time, God knew that Mary would humbly submit herself to His will and in His love for this perfect servant, He applied to her at the moment of *her* conception the redemption, won by Christ, that all Christians receive at their Baptism. She received the salvation of the

sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross before she was conceived.

In 1854, Pope Pius IX made the official declaration of the Immaculate Conception; however, the belief in the Immaculate Conception dates back to the Early Christian church. "Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception." (CCC 491) It was this growth in understanding that led to the formal declaration by Pope Pius IX 1854: "We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful." (Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius IX on the Immaculate Conception December 8, 1854)



December 8
Feast of
Immaculate Conception
Mass Schedule

8 am in the Chapel
12 noon in the Chapel
6 pm in the Church

Sources: <https://www.coraevans.com/blog/article/why-do-catholics-believe-in-the-immaculate-conception>

<https://anastpaul.com/2019/12/01/devotion-for-december-the-immaculate-conception/>

"Mary" *Journey of Faith for Adults: Inquiry, Q14*. Liguori Publications. 2016.