

The feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was instituted to solemnize the exalted dignity bestowed upon her through a special grace of God, and in behalf of the merits of Christ – a dignity and choice that preserved her from the least stain of original sin.

We must look to the Orient for the first indications of this feast. In the Eastern Church it was observed as early as the Seventh Century, and in the Western Church it became known in the Ninth Century. Pope Sixtus IV introduced it (1476) into the Roman Church; Pope Gregory XV gave it (1622) the title, "*Conceptio B.V.M. Immaculatræ*"; Innocent XII raised it (1693) to a feast of the second class with an octave; Clement XI declared it (1708) a universal holyday; Pius IX gave it (1863) new Breviary hours and a new Mass; Leo XIII raised it (1879) to a feast of the first class with a vigil. The choice of December 8 was determined and approved solely in accordance with its tradition. The First Plenary Council of Baltimore, held in 1846, chose the Blessed Virgin Mary in her Immaculate Conception as the principal patron of the United States.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception is not to be confused with that of the conception of Christ (feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary); it is the commemoration of the day on which Mary was created by God, and that in the state of grace; whereas all other human beings come into this world stained with original sin. This idea of the feast was vigorously debated by theologians till far into the Middle Ages, but was clarified more and more under the authority of the popes, so that the dogma, announced by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854, as divinely revealed, had already been universally accepted as such in the Seventeenth Century.

**INTROIT Isaiah 61: 10**

Gaudens gaudébo in Dómino, et exsultábit ánima mea in Deo meo: quia induit me vestiméntis salútis; et induménto justitiæ circúmdedit me, quasi sponsam ornátam monílibus suis. (Ps. 29: 2) Exaltábo te, Dómine, quoniam suscepisti me: nec delectásti inimícos meos super me. Glória Patri et Fílio et Spíritui Sancto, sicut erat in princípío, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculórum. Amen. Gaudens gaudébo in Dómino, et exsultábit ánima mea in Deo meo: quia induit me vestiméntis salútis; et induménto justitiæ circúmdedit me, quasi sponsam ornátam monílibus suis.

**COLLECT**

Deus, qui per immaculátam Vírginis Conceptionem dignum Fílio tuo habitáculum præparásti; quæsumus, ut qui, ex morte ejúsdem Fílii tui prævisa, eam ab omni labe præservásti, nos quoque mundos ejus intercessióne ad te pervenire concédas. Per eúndem Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

*Commemoration of Feria*

Excíta, quæsumus, Dómine, poténtiam tuam, et veni: ut ab imminéntibus peccatórum nostrórum perículis, te mereámur protegénte éripi, te liberánte salvári. Qui vivis et regnas, cum Deo Patre in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

**LESSON Proverbs 8: 22-35**

Dóminus possédit me in infítio viárum, suárum, ántequam quidquam fáceret a princípío. Ab ætérno ordináta sum, et ex antíquis, ántequam terra fieret. Nondum erant abyssus, et ego jam concépta eram: necdum fontes aquárum erúperant: necdum montes gravi mole constítérant: ante colles ego parturiébar. Adhuc terram non fécerat, et flúmina et cárdines orbis terræ. Quando præparábat cælos, áderam: quando certa lege, et gyro vallábat abyssos: quando æthera vallábat sursum, et librábat fontes aquárum: quando circúmdabat mari términum suum, et legem ponébat aquis ne transírent fines suos: quando appendébat fundaménta terræ. Cum eo eram cuncta concópnens: et dilectábar per síngulos dies, ludens coram eo omni témpore, ludens in orbe terrárum: et delíciæ meæ esse cum fíliis hóminum. Nunc ergo, fílii, audíte me: Beáti qui custódiunt vias meas. Audíte disciplinam, et estóte sapiéntes, et nolite abjícere eam. Beátus homo qui audit me, et qui vígilat ad fores meas quotidie, et obsérvat ad postes óstii mei. Qui me invénerit, invéniet vitam, et háuriet salutem a Dómino.

**GRADUAL Judith 13: 23**

Benedícta es tu, Virgo María, a Dómino Deo excélsó, præ omnibus muliéribus super terram. Tu Glória, Jerúsalem, tu lætítia Isráel, tu honorificéntia pópuli nostri.

**LESSER ALLELUIA Song of Solomon 4: 7**

Allelúja, allelúja. Tota pulchra es, María, et mácula originális non est in te. Allelúja.

**GOSPEL Luke 1: 26-28**

In illo témpore: Missus est Ángelus Gabriél a Deo in civitátem Galilææ, cui nomen Náza-reth, ad Vírginem desponsátam viro, cui nomen erat Joseph, de Dómo David et nomen Vírginis, María. Et ingrèssus Ángelus ad eam, dixit: Ave, grátia plena Dóminus tecum benedícta tu in muliéribus.

**OFFERTORY Luke 1: 28**

Ave, María, gratia plena: Dóminus tecum, benedícta tu in muliéribus, allelúja.

**SECRET**

Salutárem hóstiam, quam in solemnité immaculatæ conceptionis beátæ Vírginis Maríæ tibi, Dómine, offéram, súscipe, et prænta: ut sicut illam, tua grátia præveniéntem, ab omni labe immúnem profitémur; ita ejus intercessióne a culpis omnibus liberémur. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

*Commemoration of Feria*

Hæc sacra nos, Dómine, poténti virtúte mundátos, ad suum fáciant puriôres veníre princípium. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

**PREFACE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutáre, nos tibi semper, et ubíque grátias ágere: Dómine sancte, Pater omnipotens, ætérne Deus. Et te in solemnité immaculatæ conceptionis beátæ Maríæ semper vírginis collaudáre, benedícere, et prædicáre. Quæ et Unigénitum tuum Sancti Spíritus obumbratióne concépit, et virginitátis glória permanénte, lumen ætérnum mundo effúdit, Jesum Christum Dóminum nostrum. Per quem majestátam tuam laudant Ángeli, adórant Dominatiónes, tremunt Potestátes cæli cælórumque Virtútes, ac beáta Séraphim, sócia exsultatióne concélebrant. Cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti júbeas deprecámur, súplici confessióne dicéntes:

**COMMUNION**

Gloriôsa dicta sunt de te, María: quia fecit tibi magna qui potens est.

**POSTCOMMUNION**

Sacramenta quæ súmpsimus, Dómine Deus noster, illíus in nobis culpæ vulnèra réparent; a qua immaculátam beátæ Maríæ conceptionem singuláriter præservásti. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

*Commemoration of Feria*

Suscipiámus, Dómine, misericórdiam tuam in médio templi tui: ut reparatiónis nostræ ventúra solémnia cóngruis honóribus præcedámus. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of justice He hath covered me, as a bride adorned with her jewels. (Ps. 29: 2) I will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast upheld me: and hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of justice He hath covered me, as a bride adorned with her jewels.

O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin didst prepare a worthy dwelling-place for Thy Son: we beseech Thee, that as by the foreseen death of the same Thy Son, Thou didst preserve her from all stain, so Thou wouldst grant unto us also, through her intercession, to come unto Thee with clean hearts. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

Stir up Thy power, we beseech Thee, O Lord, and come: that from the threatening dangers of our sins we may deserve to be rescued by Thy protection, and to be saved by Thy deliverance. Who lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything, from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old, before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived; neither had the fountains of waters as yet sprung out; the mountains with their huge bulk had not as yet been established: before the hills I was brought forth; He had not yet made the earth, nor the rivers, nor the poles of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when with a certain law and compass He enclosed the depths; when He established the sky above, and poised the fountains of waters; when He compassed the sea with its bounds, and set a law to the waters that they should not pass their limits; when He balanced the foundations of the earth; I was with Him, forming all things, and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times, playing in the world: and my delight is to be with the children of men. Now therefore, ye children, hear me: blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors. He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.

Blessed art thou, O Virgin Mary, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth. Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people.

Alleluia, alleluia. Thou art all fair, O Mary, and there is in thee no stain of original sin.

At that time: The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women.

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. Alleluia.

Receive the saving Victim we offer to Thee, O Lord, on the solemn feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary: and grant that, as we confess that by Thy preventing grace she was kept free from every stain of sin; so, by her intercession, we may be delivered from all our offenses. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

May these holy mysteries, O Lord, cleanse us by their powerful virtue and make us to come with greater purity to Him Who is their source. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

It is truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God: and that we should praise and bless, and proclaim Thee, in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mary, ever-Virgin: Who also conceived Thine only-begotten Son by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, and the glory of her virginity still abiding, gave forth to the world the everlasting Light, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through whom the Angels praise Thy Majesty, the Dominations worship it, and the Powers stand in awe. The Heavens and the heavenly hosts together with the blessed Seraphim in triumphant chorus unite to celebrate it. Together with these we entreat Thee that Thou mayest bid our voices also to be admitted while we say with lowly praise:

Glorious things are told of thee, O Mary, for He who is mighty has done great things unto thee.

May the Sacraments which we have received, O Lord, our God, heal in us the wounds of that sin, from which Thou didst alone preserve the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Mary. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

May we receive, O Lord, Thy mercy in the midst of Thy temple, that we may prepare with due honor for the approaching feast of our redemption. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.