

PASTOR'S CORNER

The Immaculate Conception

The conception of a human being is both a natural and a supernatural event. The two aspects of the same event are simultaneous. Biologically, the sperm and the egg merge and bring together the material needed for a nascent human being. This merger of genetic material creates a person since simultaneous therewith a human soul is infused by God with the matter brought together by sperm and egg. This “soul” gives to the matter of the union its “essence” as a human person. One cannot occur without the other and this is true regardless of the human action that gives rise to the biological conception; be it *in vitro*, artificially inseminated, as the result of a rape, fornication, or the loving union of husband and wife. The act is pro-creative because the couple cannot make a child without the cooperation of God who alone can bring a human rational soul into being.

All of you reading this have been conceived naturally or artificially, and as a result, your soul was incarnated burdened with what the Church calls ‘original sin’. From the beginning, our souls were meant to be a perfectly formed and transparent rose window of light and color, like those found in the Cathedrals of Europe. The soul of the human is the window and it is God himself who provides the light which brings the window into majestic life. Each soul is unique in its beauty and is fashioned to show forth the light of God in a very personal and beautiful manner.

Mary of Nazareth was chosen as part of God’s plan to bear the Son of God, the Messiah, who would become the Savior of the world. As part of Mary’s preparation, God granted her a great gift of grace by allowing her to share beforehand in the merits of her Son’s death and resurrection. Mary, unlike you and I, was therefore born in communion with God. Another way of saying this is that she was born without the stain of original sin. It was fitting that she be a pure vessel, like the Ark of the Covenant of old, in order to worthily carry the very Word of God himself. For this reason, Mary’s conception is called ‘immaculate’ (meaning ‘pure’). We celebrate this solemnity on December 8 of each year. Immaculate does not mean that Mary’s parents did not conceive her in the normal course of married, conjugal relations. It means that when God created the soul of Mary he did so with the added grace of preserving it from the burden all other human beings have had to carry since Adam and Eve.

As a result of this singular grace, Mary is prepared when the angel Gabriel visits her in her teen years and asks her whether she will agree to bear the Son of God. When she asks how this can be, since she is a consecrated virgin, the angel replies that it is God the Spirit himself that will ‘overshadow’ her in the act of conceiving her child. This is a miracle and occurs outside of the natural order. Mary is a virgin who becomes pregnant through the Holy Spirit while remaining a virgin both before, during and after Jesus’s birth. We call this event the ‘virginal conception’ and the circumstances surrounding its occurrence the ‘annunciation.’ This action of divine intervention and love is celebrated each spring on March 25. Exactly nine months later Jesus is born on December 25, the feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

Because the feast of the immaculate conception occurs so close to Christmas, folks often confuse the two events. Remember, the immaculate conception refers to Mary’s conception without original sin in the womb of her mother Anne in the normal course of married life. The virginal conception, by contrast, is a miracle and refers to Jesus’ conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of his mother. As a divine person, Jesus, of course, cannot be conceived with sin at all and therefore can never know either original or personal sin. You and I, regrettably, know both and it is for this reason that we are forever indebted to both the immaculate and virginal conceptions for our salvation! Happy Advent!

Fr. Stephen Geer

Advent

Day	Date	Time	Observance	Mass Intention
VIGIL	Dec 9	5:00 pm	Vigil of the Sunday Eucharist	Joanna Kong +
SUNDAY	Dec 10	9:00 am	Second Sunday of Advent (The Holy Rosary will be prayed in the chapel at 8:30 am)	Doris Miller +
		11:30 am	Second Sunday of Advent	Missa pro populo
		2:00 pm	Second Sunday of Advent	Fr. Dominic Mtenga
Monday	Dec 11		No service	
Tuesday	Dec 12	8:30 am	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Bev Herder
Wednesday	Dec 13	8:30 am	St. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr	Priest's intention
Thursday	Dec 14	10:00 am	St. John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor of the Church	Millie Susnjara +
Friday	Dec 15	8:30 am	Advent weekday	Priest's intention
Saturday	Dec 16	8:30 am	Advent weekday (The Holy Rosary will be prayed in the Church at 8:00 am)	Henry Chieu Nguyen +
			<u>Readings for the Sunday Mass:</u> Isaiah 61.1-2a, 10-11; Luke 1.46-54; 1 Thess 5.16-24; John 1.6-8, 19-28	
VIGIL		5:00 pm	Vigil of the Sunday Eucharist	Joanna Kong +
SUNDAY	Dec 17	9:00 am	Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) (The Holy Rosary will be prayed in the chapel at 8:30 am)	Terry Dimaculangan +
		11:30 am	Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday)	Missa pro populo