

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Devotions

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



By THE REV. RAYMOND J. KNAB, C. S. S. R., M. A. "Thou art all fair, O Mary, and there is not a stain in Thee."

(Breviary) The Immaculate Conception is a title of our Blessed Mother that is most dear to all of us. Friday we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a feast that is dear to us, first of all, as Catholics, because of the honor and glory given to her whom God gave us for our Mother; dear to us as Americans, because the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the beautiful title of her Immaculate Conception, is the patroness and protectress of our beloved country.

Not Touched by Sin The Immaculate Conception is an article of Faith. That is, as Catholics, we must believe it, because the Church, the Infallible Mouthpiece of Jesus Christ, has declared that never for an instant was the pure soul of Mary touched by the least taint of original sin. Some Non-Catholics make a great deal of difficulty regarding this doctrine. Sometimes it is because they do not understand what Catholics really mean by it. They confuse it with the Virgin Birth. Again they think such an exalted privilege impossible in a creature. But they believe God is Almighty. Why then should they shake His Hands and claim that He cannot prevent Satan from touching the soul of her who was to give Him life here on earth? Far from being incredible, to the thinking man, the Immaculate Conception is the most natural, the most fitting thing in the world.

None of us had power to choose our own mother. But the Son of God did. If we had such a choice we certainly would not choose one of whom we would ever have reason to be ashamed; at whom others might point the finger of scorn, and say "That woman's early life was spent in disgrace." Christ's feelings on this point were not less sensitive. He is the All-Holy God. Between His

Soul and sin there could not be the slightest possible contact. The one positively excludes the other. Where Christ is, there sin is not. Where sin, there Christ cannot be. Surely then, when He chose His Mother, we must believe that He chose one after His Own Heart, one who would make a worthy habitation for Himself, one who in every way was fitting for a God; one who would not give His arch-enemy, Satan, the opportunity to reproach Him "I was the first to have your Mother. Before you had her I defiled her; she was my slave; she was in my power."

Remember then, Mary was not the Mother of Our Lord's human nature only. She was the Mother of God. The Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity became incarnate in Her. He took His human flesh from her and clothed in it. He lay within her, and bore it about with Him after His birth. He was known, doubtless, by His resemblance to her, to be her Son. He was nursed by her, cared for and reared by that most loving of all mothers. For thirty years He lived with her under the same roof. She was blessed with the charm of His smile, the touch of His hand, the warmth of His affection. In a word, their relations were those of mother and child, the closest possible. "Thou didst not shrink from the Virgin's womb," we sing in the hymn, "To Deum," of Our Redeemer. If that sacred temple, the Virgin Mary, had ever, even for an instant been defiled, ever been contaminated by Satan's presence, the Son of God would certainly have shrunk from Mary's womb.

Fitted for Dignity

When God chooses anyone for a sacred trust or dignity, He always fits him for it. Most who held distinguished offices, were men of great sanctity. Take the Prophets. Enoch, says Holy Scripture "walked by faith and pleased God." Noah was one of the eight just men that survived the deluge. Moses, the leader of the Israelites, in spite of a few minor faults, was a great servant of God. Jeremiah, it is believed, was cleansed from original sin when yet in his mother's womb. Of St. John the Baptist, the Prophet chosen to prepare the Jews for the coming of Our Savior, Our Lord said: "Greater prophet than John the Baptist was never born of woman." And so many others: Job, Elias, Isaias, Daniel, led such lives of righteousness that even today their names are synonymous with virtue and sanctity. True there are exceptions, like Caiaphas, a man whose vices desecrated the sacred office of High Priest. And Ahasaam, who though an impious man, was employed by God to prophesy to His people. But these are exceptions, and not the rule. Ordinarily, when God chooses anyone for an elevated office, He fits him for it.

Higher than the dignity of the Prophets, greater than the mission of the Angels, of the Cherubim and Seraphim, was the dignity and mission entrusted to Our Blessed Lady: to her who was destined to be the Mother of God. Now, if God demanded such exalted sanctity of His Prophets, if He preserved the Angels and our First Parents, free from original sin, even from the first moment of their creation, surely we should expect no less in her who was to be, not merely the mother of man, but the Mother of God.

Therefore, far from being unreasonable the doctrine of Our Lady's preservation from original sin is the most natural thing to expect. What, the more some practical conclusions to be drawn from this feast? We are preparing now for Our Blessed Lady's feast day, Friday is Our Mother's day. On occasions such as this, every child, every son and daughter worthy of the name tries in some way, or other to please his mother. They send a greeting card, flowers, a little token. What gift will give most pleasure to Our Mother in Heaven? She doesn't want riches, money or precious stones. But she does want something from us and she wants it very much. She wants us to give her our hearts. True, they are not immaculate, spotless, like her own. We must all say with the psalmist: "Behold, in iniquity my mother conceived me." But by the grace of God, by a good Confession and Communion it is in the power of every one of us to make his heart resemble hers. Cling closely to your heavenly Mother all the days of your life. And while we could not, like her, come into the world free from sin, she will obtain for us the grace to leave it without sin.

ALL YOU SEE

The typographical error is a slippery thing and sly. You can hunt till you are dizzy, but it somehow will get by. Till the forms are off the presses, it is strange how still it keeps; it shrinks down into a corner, and it never stirs or peeps. That typographical error, too small for human eyes, Till the ink is on the paper, when it grows to mountain size. The boss, he stares with horror, then he grabs his hair and moans; The copy reader drops his head upon his hands and moans— The remainder of the issue may be clean as clean can be. But that typographical error is the only thing you see. —Knockville (Iowa) Express.

Water ferns with water from which the chills has been taken off, especially in winter when the rooms are artificially heated, as ferns cannot stand the shock of cold water when grown in a warm place.

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FRANCISCAN SISTERS

If we look at the map of Egypt and follow the Nile River, we will find a city called Assuit. Not very far away from Assuit, is a village called Del-Dronka. The Franciscan Sisters work in this village and have a group of small cabins not far from the mountains. The country is bleak and the ground is hard and stony. Perhaps we had better give you the letter from Sister Clare, the Superior.

"There are four of us living in a small hut that is falling into ruins. The walls are cracked and the roof is damaged and we are bothered by all sorts of insects. The nights are terrible because of wild animals that come around our house and sometimes we fear will break in—but this is our mission and we are not complaining. There are people living here, consequently there are souls to save.

We have a small orphanage and a small day school. We take turns staying in the house with the orphans and we are glad to stay there because it is far better than our own house.

I realize that I am in some way responsible for the health of the sisters. I know, also, that if they go into bad health, they will be useless here in this mission, consequently something must be done.

We could make our house livable if we had about \$225.00 and I am sure that the sisters will be able to do better work. I hate to think that one of them may die as a result of these horrible conditions.

Surely throughout the United States, the Franciscan Sisters must have many friends. Would it be too much to hope that forty or fifty of them from all over the United States would send us \$5.00 each? We ask five dollars from them but we would be grateful if they would send even a dollar and we know that the sisters would be very grateful also. Catholic Near East Welfare Association, 480 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. Patrick Cardinal Hayes, President.

Very Rev. Mgr. James B. O'Reilly, Ph.D., National Secretary.

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

In the December FIELD AFAR Fr. John C. Barrett, of Buffalo, N. Y., Maryknoll missionary in Manchuria, writes:

Part of a language lesson for a new missionary in the wilds of any country has been to listen to the teacher read from the local newspapers. Any day one may expect to hear: "Listen to this!"—and 'tis to such as this we listen.

Ghost Rabbit Kills Man Li Chuan Yeng, aged 35, died today from railroad wounds inflicted by a ghost rabbit. Early this morning the engineer of Train No. 7 from Yellow Gold Village saw a rabbit running before the train. In the center of the railroad tracks. He whistled for his fireman, Kao, who crawled out over the hood of the engine, on to the tender. In the meantime, realizing what bad luck would come to the train if the rabbit were killed, the engineer slowed down the train, and Kao from his place on the tender tried to chase the rabbit over the side of the tracks. For three miles the rabbit ran and Kao waved his stick, until, when the train was approaching White Chalk Village, a crew of workmen saw the animal's terrible plight; and, one of the them, Li Chuan Yeng, in an effort to shoo the rabbit with a shovel, fell beneath the wheels of the train and died immediately. The ghost rabbit, after luring Li to his death, immediately disappeared.

PERPETUAL MEMBERSHIP

You may wish perpetual remembrance in the Masses, prayers, and good works of the Missionary priests, Brothers and Sisters, and of the converts in the Mission Field—not only for yourself, but also for your relatives.

BISHOP EXTENDS BOY WORK

Erie, Pa. (NCWC)—In the appointment of the Rev. Walter J. Conway as Diocesan Director of Boys' Activities, the Most Rev. John Mark Gannon, Bishop of Erie, has acted to extend boy work in his See. Father Conway during his college days at Holy Cross College, Worcester, Mass., was a prominent athlete and later served as coach at St. Mary's College, Kansas.

CHAPEL AT LEPROS ASYLUM

Singapore. (NCWC-Flides) — A Catholic Chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, has been opened at the Government Leprosy Asylum at Sungai-Buloh, near Kuala-Lumpur, in the Straits Settlements. The marion and staff doctor, both Protestants, and a large gathering of non-Catholics and pagans attended the ceremony when the chapel was blessed.

Each perpetual membership is individual, that is, one perpetual membership to only one person. A perpetual membership also includes a three year's subscription to "Catholic Missions," the official mission magazine of the society. The offering is forty dollars and, if desired, it may be completed in small installments within one year at the Director's Office, Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 50 Chestnut Street, Rochester, N. Y.

SODALTALK

Recording the Activities of Rochester Parish Sodality Union

Just a short time to prepare for Christmas. Have you a birthday present ready for the Infant Savior?

St. Peter and Paul Sodality held a successful Council Meeting. Plans are on foot for a Christmas Party, December 11. The Eucharistic Committee is making preparations for the Sodality prayer hour from 6:30-7:30 p. m. each evening during the Forty Hours Devotion. During the hour the Sodality meditate, recite prayers, sing hymns. The Apostolic Committee is engaged in preparing Christmas baskets. A stable product plus three potatoes is the price of admission to the Christmas party. The Catholic Literature Committee is preparing a book report and a summary of "The Queen's Work" for the Sodality meeting.

St. George's Sodality is holding a card party in the near future. The money is to be used to purchase flowers for the altar on Christmas morning. The Christ-Child will certainly bless the Sodality on Christmas Day. The Sodality are also making plans for an active membership drive to increase their already fine registration list. Committee work is going forward, and will be well-organized to begin the new year.

St. Mary's Sodality are engaged in the Apostolic work of dressing dolls for the Catholic Charities. Furthermore the Sodality are choosing one family and plan to make a crowded and happy Christmas day for them, everything that spells Christmas crammed into their day. Christmas love and spirit, a Christmas tree, gifts for all the family, Christmas dinner, everything. A party on the third Monday of December will make all this possible.

The candy booth at the Parish Fair was the successful work of the Sodality of St. Bridget's.

Seventy dolls for the Mission children are the results of the novel baby party which provided so much fun for the St. Andrew's Sodality. Christmas baskets are also on the list of activities of St. Andrew's. At the last Sodality meeting it was decided to send a letter of protest to the various theatres in the city where indecent pictures have been showing. Plans were discussed for another Roller Skating Party and the Sodality's annual Christmas Party. The meeting was followed by a very interesting illustrated travel lecture.

St. Patrick Cathedral Sodality are planning to entertain their Mothers on Friday, December 8. At the spiritual meeting to be held before the social The Rev. Benedict Ehmman will speak on "The Immaculate Conception". A social and program for the mothers will insure a good time for all. On December 15 the Sodality are to have a Christmas Grab Bag, which is, of course, fun and excitement. Don't forget to send your reports of the Triduum, in honor of the Immaculate Conception for the intention of the Holy Father as a Christmas gift from America's youth, to Miss Anne Brennan, 11 Henton Street, by December 11.

We take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to the patronesses and guests at the recent Sodality Union card party for their kindness and support in this Union undertaking. We also wish to express our gratitude to the officials of the Columbus Civic Center for the willing services and accommodation given us.

As a last word, do you listen in to the Rochester Catholic Hour? If not, tune in Sunday. Tune in also on the National Catholic Hour, the series of talks on Man and his nature and soul is most interesting and pertinent. A letter to the station telling them how you enjoy these broadcasts insures their continuance and is a source of encouragement.

Catholic Women's Club Schedule At The Clubhouse

Continuing the study of the Psalms as poetry, the Poetry Group of the Catholic Women's Club with Miss Blanche J. Thompson, their leader, will meet on Sunday, December 10 at 3:30 p. m. Because of a reawakened interest in the Psalms used in the liturgy of the Church, a special study is being made of them. A twilight tea will close the program. The meetings are all open to the public and Club members and their friends are invited to bring their favorite psalm and join the Group.

Monday evening, December 11, the House Committee composed of Mrs. Arthur C. Freer, chairman, Mrs. Frank J. G. Connor, Mrs. Joseph A. Coppinger, Mrs. George Ermatinger and Miss Agnes Lavelle will entertain members of the Club at the Annual Christmas party following a short business meeting. The Club Chorus will sing a group of Christmas carols and Mrs. Perry J. Burke, chairman of the Poetry Group, will read some original compositions of members of the Group together with one of her own, dedicated to the Christmas tree; and Mrs. John Otto, of the Study Group, and Miss Isabel Kimpel, pupils of Mrs. Gertrude H. Furlong, will give prose readings. A group of Christmas carols especially arranged by Miss Helen Rachwalski for two violins and piano will be played by the Misses Olive Klute and Louise Buchinger, violinists, and Marian Buchinger, pianist, and a short comedy skit will be given by Mrs. Leo Wagner. The program will close with the singing of Christmas carols by the assemblage. Refreshments will be served by the House Committee.

On a large tree erected in the dining room gifts to the house may be hung by those desiring to do so. Cordial invitation is extended by the House Committee to all to attend. Wednesday evening the Chorus will meet for rehearsal of Christmas music. Thursday evening, December 11, the fall season of the Study Group will close. The usual program of speech appreciation work and a book review will be given by Mrs. John Sobie, after which members will be entertained at tea. Mrs. George W. O'Grady, the chairman of the group, announces that the second course of the season will be opened by Mrs. Sobie immediately after the holidays. Friday evening the Mission Group will sew for charity.

What should we think of prophecies of persons of holiness, who are still living? Disregard them and do not spread them. Foreign papers reported recently that false reports of prophecies were in circulation, that were invented by enemies of the Church to throw discredit on religion.

"Must priests say Mass daily?" "No. Our priests in the United States generally say Mass every day when they are able. But that was not the practice in earlier days and it is not an obligation imposed by Canon Law.

Question Box

What should we think of prophecies of persons of holiness, who are still living? Disregard them and do not spread them. Foreign papers reported recently that false reports of prophecies were in circulation, that were invented by enemies of the Church to throw discredit on religion.

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