



Deacon Deliberations by Deacon Gary Kupsak

“The Most Important Woman Who Ever Lived”

From time to time the Sunday newspapers and periodicals such as Time and People magazines run lists of the world’s most important women of all time. They often include figures like Joan of Arc, Marie Curie, Rosa Parks and St. Teresa of Calcutta, to mention a few. But they never include the most important woman who ever lived – Mary, the Mother of Jesus. This ordinary woman, born in obscurity in Palestine more than 2,000 years ago, has changed the course of human history like no other woman before or after her. And of all the women who have ever lived, she has been the most venerated and honored. She is held in such high esteem because it was through her faith that the second person of the Trinity was able to become a human being and achieve for us eternal salvation.

But her feast, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary has at times been referred to as the “Immaculate Misconception,” in that some Catholics don’t know what the feast celebrates. This solemnity does not celebrate the conception of Jesus Christ in the Virgin Mary’s womb. This is MARY’S feast, and at least in its literal meaning, has little to do with her son, Jesus Christ. The Immaculate Conception was defined by Pius IX on December 8, 1854 as, “the Virgin Mary, at the moment of her conception [remember that although never mentioned in Sacred Scripture, Mary’s biological parents were Joachim and Anne], was preserved from all the defilement of original sin by a unique privilege of grace, from which was born Jesus the Christ.”

Don’t feel bad if you can’t fully wrap your mind around the Immaculate Conception, it is one of the more complex teachings of our faith. It’s really deep stuff. Picture it like this: you’re walking down a path in the forest and you fall into a deep, dark pit. That pit represents original sin. Someone reaches in the pit to pull you out... they are now your “savior.” In Mary’s case, before she fell into the pit, God intervened and lifted her over the pit. He preserved her from the pain (and the stain) of original sin.

This coming Friday, December 8th, we celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patroness of the United States of America. We believe that Mary, from the first moment of her conception, was preserved from sin. This unique privilege was hers because God in his wisdom could see that she would be the one to say “Yes” to his plan for our salvation. Mary’s whole life was one of complete response to God’s grace. On Friday, and every day thereafter, let’s honor

the most important woman who ever existed, who was handpicked by God to bring his only Son into this world and ask Mary to intercede with her son Jesus Christ and with God the Father so that we may be able to more easily learn from her and open ourselves to the will of God.

**“Queen of Heaven, rejoice, Alleluia;
For He whom thou did deserve to bear, Alleluia;
Is risen again as he foretold, Alleluia.
Pray for us O Holy Mother of God, Alleluia.”**