**SATURDAY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

# IMMACULATE MOTHER

Generally, when one says that the Virgin Mary is Immaculate, one means that she has been preserved free from original sin since the first moment of her life. She has never known Adam's inheritance, nor has She ever known personal sin, neither serious nor slight. The Lord granted her the highest grace of her impeccability. Here is an excerpt from the dogma:

*Wherefore, in humility and fasting, we unceasingly offered our private prayers as well as the public prayers of the Church to God the Father through his Son, that he would deign to direct and strengthen our mind by the power of the Holy Spirit. In like manner did we implore the help of the entire heavenly host as we ardently invoked the Paraclete. Accordingly, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for the honor of the Holy and undivided Trinity, for the glory and adornment of the Virgin Mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith, and for the furtherance of the Catholic religion, by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own: 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.* *Hence, if anyone shall dare -- which God forbid! -- to think otherwise than as has been defined by us, let him know and understand that he is condemned by his own judgment; that he has suffered shipwreck in the faith; that he has separated from the unity of the Church; and that, furthermore, by his own action he incurs the penalties established by law if he should dare to express in words or writing or by any other outward means the errors he thinks in his heart.*

*Hoped for results. Our soul overflows with joy and our tongue with exultation. We give, and we shall continue to give, the humblest and deepest thanks to Jesus Christ, our Lord, because through his singular grace he has granted to us, unworthy though we be, to decree and offer this honor and glory and praise to his most holy Mother. All our hope do we repose in the most Blessed Virgin -- in the all fair and immaculate one who has crushed the poisonous head of the most cruel serpent and brought salvation to the world: in her who is the glory of the prophets and apostles, the honor of the martyrs, the crown and joy of all the saints; in her who is the safest refuge and the most trustworthy helper of all who are in danger; in her who, with her only-begotten Son, is the most powerful Mediatrix and Conciliatrix in the whole world; in her who is the most excellent glory, ornament, and impregnable stronghold of the holy Church; in her who has destroyed all heresies and snatched the faithful people and nations from all kinds of direst calamities; in her do we hope who has delivered us from so many threatening dangers. We have, therefore, a very certain hope and complete confidence that the most Blessed Virgin will ensure by her most powerful patronage that all difficulties be removed and all errors dissipated, so that our Holy Mother the Catholic Church may flourish daily more and more throughout all the nations and countries, and may reign "from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth," and may enjoy genuine peace, tranquillity and liberty. We are firm in our confidence that she will obtain pardon for the sinner, health for the sick, strength of heart for the weak, consolation for the afflicted, help for those in danger; that she will remove spiritual blindness from all who are in error, so that they may return to the path of truth and justice, and that here may be one flock and one shepherd.*

*Let all the children of the Catholic Church, who are so very dear to us, hear these words of ours. With a still more ardent zeal for piety, religion and love, let them continue to venerate, invoke and pray to the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, conceived without original sin. Let them fly with utter confidence to this most sweet Mother of mercy and grace in all dangers, difficulties, needs, doubts and fears. Under her guidance, under her patronage, under her kindness and protection, nothing is to be feared; nothing is hopeless. Because, while bearing toward us a truly motherly affection and having in her care the work of our salvation, she is solicitous about the whole human race. And since she has been appointed by God to be the Queen of heaven and earth, and is exalted above all the choirs of angels and saints, and even stands at the right hand of her only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, she presents our petitions in a most efficacious manner. What she asks, she obtains. Her pleas can never be unheard.*

*Finally, to make known to the entire Church this Our definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, We desire that this Apostolic Letter of Ours remain a perpetual memorial and We command that the very same credence be given to transcripts and printed copies as to this original, if it were publicly posted or exhibited. However, such transcripts and copies must be undersigned by a notary public and authenticated by the sea I of a person of ecclesiastica I rank. Let no one, then, interfere with this document of Our declaration, Pronouncement, and definition, or oppose and contradict it with temerity and boldness. lf anyone should presume to interfere, let him know that he will incur the anger of the all-powerful God and of His Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. Given at Rome in St. Peter's in the year of the Inca rnation year of Our Pontificate.*

To entirely acknowledge the great significance of what is attributed to the Virgin Mary, it is necessary to refer to the entire Holy Scripture. We find the first revelation in the Chapter III of Genesis. Here is what God the Lord says to the serpent: “*Allora il Signore Dio disse al serpente: «* *Then the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you shall be banned from all the animals and from all the wild creatures; On your belly shall you crawl, and dirt shall you eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel» (Gen 3,14-15).* The enmity between the serpent and the woman is not only eternal, it is also full. The woman will be the serpent's enemy with all her soul, with all her strength, with all her heart, with all her thoughts, with all Herself. She will be the serpent's enemy because she was created by God full of grace, light, strength, wisdom, intelligence, and every other gift necessary so that enmity would also be combat aimed at crushing the head of the infernal serpent. Not only was the Virgin Mary conceived without sin, with her the Lord was exceedingly rich. He gave her every one of His gifts without measure. It is as if He had created out of Himself a being in His own image and likeness unmixed with the dust of the ground into whose face He then breathed the breath of life. Instead of making use of the dust of the ground, he made use of his light and grace, his truth and eternal life, and having thus kneaded it, he not only breathed into it the breath of life, he also chose heart, soul, spirit, body as his eternal dwelling, as his true created temple. Then around this most holy temple, he placed a wall of fire so that Satan could never touch her, not even with his shadow. That the Virgin Mary is filled with grace and is the dwelling place of the Almighty is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Gospel according to Luke. In this Gospel, *“Full of grace”* and *“The Lord is with you*”, is the name of the Virgin Mary. For people She is Mary, for the Lord her name is *“Full of Grace”* and also *“The Lord is with you”*. The substitution of the name indicates the vocation of the Virgin Mary.

*In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home. (Lk 1,26-56).*

For Elizabeth, the Virgin Mary is the Mother of her Lord. The Holy Spirit could never have made Mary's womb fruitful if there had been even one venial sin in her. The Virgin Mary was conceived Immaculate, Immaculate she remained. Immaculate she ascended to heaven, at the moment of her passage and the transformation of her body into light, clothed in immortality, un-corruption and eternal glory. God's grace in her was not only without measure, without measure it also grew in her, by her always full, always immediate, always perfect obedience. Not only did Mary not only obey God, She also always obeyed Joseph, placed by God at her side to be her husband, but also her guardian and the keeper of the Son of God whom she gave birth to by the Holy Spirit. Here are the great things done for her by the Lord: not only did He want Her and make Her the Mother of his eternal Son by becoming true man in her virginal womb. This is the work of the works of God. But also the great things are her being always the Immaculate One, always the Full of grace and the Holy Spirit, always the Most Perfect Tent of the Lord our God, always She who crushes the head of the infernal serpent. In the Gospel according to John she is presented as the Virgin who enters the heart of the Son with the most powerful key that is the Holy Spirit. Just as the Father enters the heart of the Son with the key of the Holy Spirit, so too the Virgin Mary enters the heart of the Son with the key of the Holy Spirit. By entering with this key, She will always be able to ask for any grace, because the Son also enters the Father's heart and the Mother's heart with the key of the Holy Spirit.

*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." (And) Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him. (Jn 2,1-11).*

Thus the Holy Spirit teaches us that He alone is the key with which every heart is opened. How can we come into possession of this key? The key is given to us through every Sacrament we experience. Once we receive the key, it is never lost. What is the safest place to keep it? Our Mother's heart. That is why her Son, while on the cross, a moment before his death, gave us all his Mother as our true Mother, so that in her heart we might keep the key of the Holy Spirit. How do we keep the key of the Spirit in the heart of our heavenly Mother? By us loving the Virgin Mary and obeying her in the same way that the Son obeyed the Father. The more our obedience grows, the greater the key of the Spirit becomes. With a key that grows without measure always we can open the heart of our Mother and from the heart of our Mother always with the key of the Holy Spirit, we can open the heart of Christ. Once Christ's heart is opened, always the Father's heart is opened.

*Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (Jn 19,25-27).*

The Virgin Mary is our true Mother, because she is the true Mother of the Son of God, and in the Son of God we become true children of the Father and true children of the Mother. One is not true children of God if one is not true children of Mary. One cannot be true children of Mary if one is not true children of God. Just as Jesus first, from eternity, is true Son of God and then in time becomes true Son of Mary, so it is for us. In Baptism the Holy Spirit makes us true bodies of Christ, as true bodies of Christ we become true children of God and true children of Mary. The Holy Spirit thus reveals this mystery in the Letter to the Galatians.

*I mean that as long as the heir is not of age, he is no different from a slave, although he is the owner of everything, but he is under the supervision of guardians and administrators until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were not of age, were enslaved to the elemental powers of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. (Gal 4,1-7).*

Then, here is who is also the Virgin Mary: the Eternal Immaculate. She is the Woman the Lord has clothed with his divine and eternal light. She is the one who was made Queen of the Angels and of Saints.

*Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm. A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth. Then another sign appeared in the sky; it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadems. Its tail swept away a third of the stars in the sky and hurled them down to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth, to devour her child when she gave birth. She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne. The woman herself fled into the desert where she had a place prepared by God, that there she might be taken care of for twelve hundred and sixty days (Rev 11,19-12,6).*

Now let us ask: Could She ever be proclaimed Queen of the angels, who are pure spirits without blemish, if there had been a single venial sin in Mary? Never. Mary is not only the Immaculate, not only is she the Full of Grace, not only is the Lord with her. Mary is also the one who in holiness surpasses the holiness of all the angels and saints. That is why she has been raised to be their Queen and Lord. No angel can ever say to Mary: my holiness is greater than yours. So also no saint and no martyr. Angels and saints are only saints. Mary is the Most Holy. This is her glory. Holiness is in her always unblemished, always immaculate, always most pure. Mother of God, clothe us with your immaculate holiness.

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