



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY POPE FRANCIS ANGELUS *Saint Peter's Square*

Tuesday, 8 December 2020 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

Today's liturgical feast celebrates one of the wonders of the history of salvation: the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Even she was saved by Christ, but in an extraordinary way, because God wanted that the mother of his Son not be touched by the misery of sin from the moment of conception. And thus, for the entire course of her earthly life, Mary was free from any stain of sin, she was "full of grace" (Lk 1:28), as the angel called her. She was favoured by a unique action of the Holy Spirit so as to always remain in perfect relationship with her Son, Jesus. Indeed, she was Jesus' disciple: his Mother and disciple. But there was no sin in her.

In the magnificent hymn that opens the Letter to the Ephesians (cf. 1:3-6, 11-12), Saint Paul makes us understand that every human being is created by God for that fullness of holiness, for that beauty in which Our Lady was clothed from the beginning. The goal to which we are called is also a gift of God for us, for which, the Apostle says he "chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (v. 4); he predestined us (cf. v. 5), in Christ to be totally free from sin one day. And this is the grace, it is free, it is a gift of God.

And what Mary had from the beginning, will be ours in the end, after we have passed through the purifying "bath" of God's grace. What opens the gates of paradise to us is God's grace, received by us with faithfulness. All the saints walked this path. Even the most innocent were, nevertheless, marked by original sin and fought with all their strength against its consequences. They passed through the "narrow door" that leads to life (cf. Lk 13:24). And do you know who is the first person we are sure entered paradise? Do you know who? A "ruffian": one of the two who was crucified with Jesus. And he turned to Jesus saying: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom". And He responded: "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:42-43). Brothers and sisters, God's grace is offered to everyone; and many who are the least on this earth will be the

first in heaven (cf. Mk 10:31).

But be careful. It does not pay to be clever — to continually postpone a serious evaluation of one's own life, taking advantage of the Lord's patience. He is patient. He waits for us. He is always ready to give us grace. We may be able to deceive people, but not God; he knows our hearts better than we do ourselves. Let us take advantage of the present moment! This, yes, is the Christian sense of seizing the day. Not to enjoy life in each passing moment — no, this is the worldly sense. But to seize today, to say "no" to evil and "yes" to God, to open oneself to his grace, to once and for all stop falling back on ourselves, dragging ourselves into hypocrisy and to face our own reality as we are — to recognize that we have not loved God and neighbour as we should have. And to confess it. This is the beginning of a journey of conversion, asking God's pardon first of all in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and then to repair the harm done to others. But always open to grace: the Lord knocks on our door, he knocks on our heart to enter into friendship with us, in communion, to give us salvation.

And this, for us, is the path for becoming "holy and immaculate". The uncontaminated beauty of our Mother is incomparable, but at the same time it attracts us. Let us entrust ourselves to her and say "no" to sin and "yes" to Grace once and for all.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet all of you, the faithful from Rome, and pilgrims from various countries, and I greet the "Immacolata" group, today, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception: they are great, they are always here!

Today, the members of Italian Catholic Action renew their commitment to the Association. I extend my greeting to them and wish them a good journey. I pray that Christ may be formed in you, as Saint Paul wrote, and that you may be artisans of fraternity.

I greet the representatives of the city of Rocca di Papa who, according to tradition, will light the Christmas star on the city's fortress today. May the light of Christ always illuminate your community.

As you know, this afternoon the traditional veneration of the Immaculate Conception in Piazza di Spagna will not take place. But this does not keep us from offering our Mother the flowers that she enjoys the most: prayer, penance, a heart open to Grace. Nonetheless, early this morning, I went privately to Piazza di Spagna and then to Saint Mary Major where I celebrated Mass.

I wish everyone a Happy Feast Day. And, please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.

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