

## Immaculate Conception-2

*Mary is chosen not because she's so great; she's so great because she's chosen.*

Did you know that Mary did know, her child would save the world? In fact, she was saved around forty-seven years before Jesus died. Church wants to demonstrate how Scripture indicates to the fact that Mary was immaculately conceived, and why this solemnity is so important to the Church.

First of all, we need to know that this is not about the conception of Jesus, but about the conception of Mary. The dogma, of 1854: "*the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her conception, by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of Mankind, was kept free from all stain of original sin.*"; means-Mary was preserved free from the effects of the sin of Adam (usually referred to as "original sin") from the first instant of her conception.

Mary call God, her savior: Jesus saved her, though Jesus died many years before her death. How shall we understand this?  
*Eg: Covid- pandemic.* Treated and healed. But then companies comes up with a vaccine. And if you get this vaccine before you get the disease, you won't get the decease, you will live. Redemption being understood in two ways: you get the decease, you get the cure, you live; or you get the vaccine, you are preserved from getting the decease, you live.

Jesus saved us after we get sick; the original sin; In Mary's case, the way that God saved Mary was, he preserved her from getting the stain/sickness of original sin, by the merits of the future death and resurrection of her son Jesus. If the merits of Jesus's death can go to future 2K years, it can go to the past, retroactive, because God is beyond time.

Divine grace can act in two ways: **prevenient grace/consequential grace**: Prevenient grace refers to the grace of God in a person's life that precedes sin/conversion. The original expression means literally "grace that precedes". John Duns Scotus cleared the path to a theologically sound acceptance of this Marian prerogative. By his lucid exposition and defense of the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception in the womb of St. Anne as a preparation for her divine motherhood, he paved the way for its solemn definition in later times by Blessed Pope Pius IX.

In 1858 Our Lady appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, France. When Bernadette asked the beautiful lady who she was, Mary identified herself in these words: "*I am the Immaculate Conception.*" (1857- CFIC founded by Bl. L.M.Monti)

*The Virgin Mary is given more graces than any creature in history, because she has the most special and unique role, as the axis of the Incarnation, the woman from whom Jesus Christ takes flesh, the woman who conceives, carries, gives birth, and raises Jesus Christ, mothering him, serving him, and following him even to the cross. For nine months, she was his sanctuary and his earthly Temple.*

In other words, Mary isn't chosen because she's so great; she's so great because she's chosen. The same God who, through his grace makes us into brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, making us holy in the process, by a singular grace kept Mary from all sin for her unique role as a *mother* to Jesus Christ.

But in both cases, the grace shown to a single individual isn't just for their private good, *but for the good of all of us*. Some people are given more than others—more gifts, more talents, and even more *graces*—but what's given is given for sharing. Underlying the surface level inequality is divine justice, for "Everyone to whom much is given, of

him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more” (Luke 12:48).

*God preserves her from sin, so that the Ark of the New Covenant will be a spotless and pure abode for our Lord. In exchange for much that she has been given, much is expected. This is fulfilled in her ready responsiveness to Christ, but it doesn't stop with the end of her earthly life. After all, the Virgin Mary is given to the world for all of us, because she's given to the world for the sake of Jesus' mission.*

And that mission is ongoing. It is *because* God chose Mary from all eternity, purified her, and brought about the Incarnation, and our subsequent salvation through her free cooperation that we can count on her to continue to give freely and generously from the wealth of graces which she has received.

Her 'Fiat' (*Let it be done*) brings Jesus the saviour to the world. It's our 'Fiat' that will cause to incarnate Jesus in Today's world. May, conceived without sin, pray for us sinners.

If you want to know what God's predestination looks like, look to the Virgin Mary. And you can't understand Mary without understanding predestination. If you pay attention, you'll often see that on Marian feast days, the Church will include a reading from St. Paul about grace and/or predestination. Today's 2nd Reading is from Ephesians 1:3-6 (First, was Mary in need of redemption if she had been conceived without a stain of original sin? Second, when, in the course of her conception, was Mary preserved from the stain and effects of origin of sin?)

Fr. Zimmerman, points out that it would be easy to fall into envy—*God preserved Mary from all sin*, but let the rest of us struggling in the fight against sin. St. Augustine makes a similar point in a *commentary on John 5:1-18*, after Jesus goes to Bethesda, where a large number of the sick were present, and healed only *one of them*: "There lay so many there, and yet only one was healed, while He could by a word have raised them all up."