

## COMMUNION

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O Mary: for he that is mighty hath done great things to thee.

## POSTCOMMUNION

O Lord, who in her Conception didst wondrously preserve the blessed Virgin Mary from all sin: grant, we beseech thee; that the Sacrament, which we have received, may heal in us the wounds of the sins which we have committed.

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54 Within this biblical framework we have considered afresh the distinctive place of the Virgin Mary in the economy of grace, as the one who bore Christ, the elect of God. The word of God delivered by Gabriel addresses her as already 'graced', inviting her to respond in faith and freedom to God's call (Luke 1:28,38,45). The Spirit is operative within her in the conception of the Saviour, and this "blessed among women" is inspired to sing "all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:42,48). Viewed eschatologically, Mary thus embodies the 'elect Israel' of whom Paul speaks - glorified, justified, called, predestined. This is the pattern of grace and hope which we see at work in the life of Mary, who holds a distinctive place in the common destiny of the Church as the one who bore in her own flesh 'the Lord of glory'. Mary is marked out from the beginning as the chosen, called and graced by God through the Holy Spirit for the task that lay ahead of her.

59 Roman Catholics are bound to believe that "the most blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin" (Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, defined by Pope Pius IX, 1854).<sup>11</sup> The definition teaches that Mary, like all other human beings, has need of Christ as her Saviour and Redeemer (cf. Lumen Gentium 53; Catechism of the Catholic Church 491). The negative notion of 'sinlessness' runs the risk of obscuring the fullness of Christ's saving work. It is not so much that Mary lacks something which other human beings 'have', namely sin, but that the glorious grace of God filled her life from the beginning.<sup>12</sup> The holiness which is our end in Christ (cf. 1 John 3:2-3) was seen, by unmerited grace, in Mary, who is the prototype of the hope of grace for humankind as a whole. According to the New Testament, being 'graced' has the connotation of being freed from sin through Christ's blood (Ephesians 1:6-7). The Scriptures point to the efficacy of Christ's atoning sacrifice even for those who preceded him in time (cf. 1 Peter 3:19, John 8:56, 1 Corinthians 10:4). Here again the eschatological perspective illuminates our understanding of Mary's person and calling. In view of her vocation to be the mother of the Holy One (Luke 1:35), we can affirm together that Christ's redeeming work reached 'back' in Mary to the depths of her being, and to her earliest beginnings. This is not contrary to the teaching of Scripture, and can only be understood in the light of Scripture. Roman Catholics can recognize in this what is affirmed by the dogma - namely "preserved from all stain of original sin" and "from the first moment of her conception."

Mary, Grace and Hope in Christ,

*Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission II, 2004*

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cf Luke 1

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## THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Saturday 8 December 2012

*Welcome to St Mary's, especially if you are visiting us for the first time.*

*Except for the Rite of Penance, the Order for Mass is found in the High Mass book.*

*The Ordinary of the Mass is sung to the Chant Miss cum Jubilo.*

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It is a fact that when "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4-6) was definitively drawing near -- the saving advent of Emmanuel -- she who was from eternity destined to be his Mother already existed on earth. The fact that she "preceded" the coming of Christ is reflected every year in the liturgy of Advent. Therefore, if to that ancient historical expectation of the Saviour we compare these years which are bringing us closer to the end of the second Millennium after Christ and to the beginning of the third, it becomes fully comprehensible that in this present period we wish to turn in a special way to her, the one who in the "night" of the Advent expectation began to shine like a true "Morning Star" (Stella Matutina). For just as this star, together with the "dawn," precedes the rising of the sun, so Mary from the time of her Immaculate Conception preceded the coming of the Saviour, the rising of the "Sun of Justice" in the history of the human race.

*From Redemptoris Mater, John Paul II*

HYMN 184 *Shall we not love thee Mother dear*

INTROIT

*Isaiah 61.10, Psalm 30.1*

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord my God: yea, my soul shall be joyful and glad in him: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. I will magnify thee, O Lord, for thou hast set me up: and not made my foes to triumph over me.

CONFITEOR

**I confess to almighty God and to you, brethren, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed: (each strikes his breast thrice, saying:) through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever-virgin, all the angels and saints and you, brethren, to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

COLLECT

O God, who in the foreknowledge of thy Son's most precious death, didst consecrate an habitation meet for him by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary: mercifully grant; that she who was thus delivered from our nature's taint may evermore pray for us, until we also attain unto thee in purity of heart.

FIRST READING

*Genesis 3.9-15.20*

The LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him: 'Where art thou?' And he said: 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' And he said: 'Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?' And the man said: 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.' And the LORD God said unto the woman: 'What is this that thou hast done?' And the woman said: 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.' And the LORD God said unto the serpent: 'Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

GRADUAL

*Judith 13.18, 15.9*

Blessed art thou, O Virgin Mary, of the Lord, the most high God, above all women upon earth. Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel: thou art the rejoicing of our nation.

EPISTLE

*Ephesians 1.3-6,11-12*

Brethren: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the

purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

ALLELUIA

*cf Song of Songs v4*

All fair art thou, O Mary: and the stain of original sin is not in thee.

GOSPEL

*St Luke 1.26-38*

At that time: in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgins name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

HOMILY

CREED

*Credo III, Missa de Angelis*

HYMN 185 *Sing we of the Blessed Mother*

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Accept, O Lord, the sacrifice of our salvation, which we offer unto thee on this feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary: and grant that, like as we do confess her by the prevention of thy grace to have been preserved from every stain of sin; so by her intercession we may be delivered from all our iniquities.

PREFACE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

And that in the glorious Immaculate Conception of Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, we should praise, bless, and tell forth thy wonders. In that by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, she conceived thy only begotten Son; and without let to the glory of her abiding maidenhood, brought forth for man, the Light eternal, even Jesus Christ our Lord.