

She Is Your Immaculate Mother!

These lines tonight, written by Father Maurice Powers, C.S.C. of Holy Cross College, Washington, D.C., will help you appreciate tomorrow night's picture of Mary appearing to young Bernadette, peasant of Lourdes:

It's a hectic world. Large brutal nations picking smaller ones to pieces, like raving, starving, maddened lions ripping into harmless deer.

Trace the dial of history back. Ninety years ago was another sad day. Louis Phillippe had lost his throne in France; the seeds of Voltaire and Rousseau were flowering in debased radicalism. Bismarck was bursting with effort to lift himself high. The manifesto of Browder's saint, Marx, was diverting the eyes of the world away from the torch of Christ's holy principles. Russia's Nicholas was scrapping his Concordat with Rome: implacably hostile he ravaged Ruthenia. Austria was yielding under the insidious onslaught of Garibaldi. Lost were the Papal States. The Pope was in exile at Gaeta. Europe's thrones were tottering. Truly the pontificate of Pius IX fell in evil days, days of fratricidal hatred!

Yet there was a moment of refreshment and peace one December morning in 1854. Late from exile the Vicar of Christ descends the grand stairs of Constantine in the Basilica of St. Peter's. The circle of cardinals about him forms a bright red gown. Then the chant of the litany, consecrated by ages, wafts over the concourse of 100,000. Tear-dimmed, solemn, dignified, the Supreme Pontiff defines, decrees and confirms the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God:

When the ineffable God had foreseen from all eternity that the most lamentable ruin of the whole human race was to follow from the transgression of Adam, and in a mystery hidden from the ages, had decreed, by a hidden mystery, the completion of the first work of His goodness, that man should not perish, He chose and ordained for His only begotten Son from the beginning of all time and before all the ages, a Mother from whom He would be born in the happy fullness of time. He honored her before all creatures; filled her with heavenly gifts out of the treasury of His divinity that she might always be free from every stain of sin; wholly beautiful and perfect. . . .

Your own earthly mother you have always loved. Perhaps you have a fine girl whom you also love, whom you hope God will one day make a pure mother.

It is only imagination, but suppose you could choose all the qualities you would like to see in your children's mother. You would make her beautiful indeed! She would excel the best Titian masterpiece! What features, what brilliance, what inimitable loveliness in her hands and face. Above all, what beauty of soul! Surely you would not consider marrying that soul with stain.

But in God's case, this was not mere imagination. God could select the Mother of His Son. God could make Her Immaculate, free from the slightest sin. He did. And that is the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

And this same Mother is yours. She is your Mother here. This is her University. She shall be your Mother wherever you go, whatever you do. Do not disgrace her. Till the moment of your death she shall be your Mother, your White Intercessor at the Throne of God. Live and die well. Then she shall be your Mother forever.

Some men assail this holy doctrine. Cheerlessly they deny your Mother's prerogative. But to move those who do not accept the pope's infallible word, Mary speaks the language of miracles. She still works them at Lourdes, where she herself said to the child Bernadette that day: "I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION."