

University of Notre Dame

Tomorrow: all Masses in
Sacred Heart Church as
on Sunday.

Religious Bulletin
December 7, 1955

Tomorrow's Feast

Start tomorrow, or Friday --
the Christmas Novena for your
parents.

Occasionally, some Catholics confuse the Immaculate Conception with the virgin-birth of Our Lord. Tomorrow's feast refers to the singular honor bestowed upon the little Jewish girl long before she conceived Our Lord.

You will recall that when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to ask if she would consent to become the Mother of God, Gabriel paid her the reverent greeting:

"Hail, full of grace!"

What does this signify? It means that she already possessed sanctifying grace. It means that her soul already was adorned with supernatural life. It means that her sanctity began with her first moment of life in the womb of her mother, Ann. It means that she was never defiled with the stain of original sin -- as are all other children of Adam. It means a departure from the universal pattern.

Holiness such as this was her privilege alone. And this privilege is called the Immaculate Conception.

An Appropriate Gift

As Mother of God, Mary's position and dignity were entirely extraordinary and singular. It was highly fitting that God should have bestowed upon her a measure of sanctity in keeping with her position, and in excess of the holiness enjoyed by any other creature. You will recall that certain prophets -- such as John the Baptist -- were cleansed of original sin while still in the womb. To be more highly privileged than they, Mary must have been sanctified at the first moment of conception.

It is a greater favor, a greater benefit, to preserve a person from sickness or accident than to cure him after he has fallen victim to misfortune. And so here -- it is a greater benefit and favor to preserve a soul from original sin than to cleanse away a defilement that has already been contracted. Mary was redeemed in this more perfect way by being preserved from sin.

Since she was a child of Adam, like the rest of mankind, she was therefore included under the law of human heritage. She would have contracted the guilt of original sin except for a very special intervention on the part of God Who prevented the natural application of that law. And so, by divine favor, accorded to her alone among all the children of men, her soul at the moment of conception, instead of being defiled with sin, was marvelously adorned and beautified with grace and virtue. And so the Angel Gabriel greeted her: "Hail, full of grace!"

That Mary was actually preserved free from all taint of sin through the merits of her Divine Son, is the solemn teaching of the Catholic Church, defined by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854, and proposed as a doctrine divinely revealed and consequently as of obligation for all the faithful to accept and believe.

Any son rejoices in a great honor paid to his mother. Since Mary is the Mother of God and our mother, we keep high festival tomorrow, observing this holy day of obligation as we do Sunday. Tomorrow, all Spanish-speaking students will gather in Sacred Heart Church for the 9 o'clock Mass. Father Pelton will preach on "Our Lady in the New World". Confessions will be heard in Spanish (Main Entrance - Gospel Side) at this Mass.

PRAYERS REQUESTED - Deceased: father of Rev. Daniel O'Neil, CSC; aunt of Jim O'Brien, of Walsh; friend of Bob Welch of Alumni. Ill: child of Professor Bernard; father of Phil Allen of Zahm; father of John Garland of Old College. 3 Special Intentions.