



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Tuesday, 8 December 2015*

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning and happy feast day!

Today the Feast of the Immaculate Conception leads us to contemplate Our Lady who, by unique privilege, was preserved from original sin from the very moment of her conception. Even living in a world marked by sin, she was not touched by it: Mary is our sister in suffering, but not in evil or in sin. Instead, evil was conquered in her even before deflowering her, because God had filled her with grace (cf. Lk 1:28). The Immaculate Conception signifies that Mary is the first one to be saved by the infinite mercy of the Father, which is the first fruit of salvation which God wills to give to every man and woman, in Christ. For this reason the Immaculate One has become the sublime icon of the divine mercy which conquered sin. Today, at the beginning of the Jubilee of Mercy, we want to look to this icon with trusting love and to contemplate her in all her splendour, emulating her faith.

In the Immaculate Conception of Mary we are invited to recognize the dawn of the new world, transformed by the salvific work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The dawn of the new creation brought about by divine mercy. For this reason the Virgin Mary, never infected by sin and always full of God, is the mother of a new humanity. She is the mother of the recreated world.

Celebrating this feast entails two things. First: fully welcoming God and his merciful grace into our life. Second: becoming in our turn artisans of mercy by means of an evangelical journey. The

Feast of the Immaculate Conception then becomes the feast of all of us if, with our daily “yes”, we manage to overcome our selfishness and make the life of our brothers ever more glad, to give them hope, by drying a few tears and giving a bit of joy. In imitation of Mary, we are called to become bearers of Christ and witnesses to his love, looking first of all to those who are privileged in the eyes of Jesus. It is they who he himself indicated: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Mt 25:35-36).

Today’s Feast of the Immaculate Conception has a specific message for us: it reminds us that in our life everything is a gift, it is all mercy. May the Blessed Virgin, first fruit of the saved, model of the Church, Holy and Immaculate Spouse, loved by the Lord, help us to ever increasingly rediscover divine mercy as the distinguishing mark of Christians. One cannot understand a true Christian who is not merciful, just as one cannot comprehend God without his mercy. This is the epitomizing word of the Gospel: mercy. It is the fundamental feature of the face of Christ: that face that we recognize in the various aspects of his existence: when he goes to meet everyone, when he heals the sick, when he sits at the table with sinners, and above all when, nailed to the cross, he forgives; there we see the face of divine mercy. Let us not be afraid: let us allow ourselves to be embraced by the mercy of God who awaits us and forgives all. Nothing is sweeter than his mercy. Let us allow ourselves to be caressed by God: the Lord is so good, and he forgives all.

Through the intercession of Immaculate Mary, may mercy take possession of our hearts and transform our whole life.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you all with affection, especially families, parish groups and associations.

This afternoon I shall go to Piazza di Spagna, to pray at the feet of the monument to the Immaculate. I will then go to St Mary Major. I ask you to join me spiritually on this pilgrimage, which is an act of filial devotion to Mary, Mother of Mercy. I shall entrust to her the Church and all of humanity, and in a special way the city of Rome.

Today Pope Benedict also passed through the Door of Mercy. Let us greet Pope Benedict from here!

I wish everyone a happy feast day and an abundantly fruitful Holy Year, with the guidance and intercession of our Mother; a Holy Year filled with mercy, for you and, from you, for others. Please, ask this of the Lord for me too, as I have such a need for it! Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*

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