

PREFACE FOR THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

VERE dignum et justum est, æquum et salutäre, nos tibi semper, et ubique grätias ägere: Dómine sancte, Pater omnipotens, ætérne Deus: Et te in Conceptione Immaculáta beátæ Mariæ semper Vírginis collaudäre, benedicere et prædicäre. Quæ et Unigénitum tuum Sancti Spíritus obumbratióne concépit: et virginitätis glória permanénte, lumen aetérnum mundo effúdit, Jesum Christum Dóminum nostrum. Per quem majestátem tuam laudánt Angeli, adórant Dominationes, tremunt Potestátes. Cæli, cælórúmque Virtútes, ac beáta Séraphim, sócia exultatióne concélebrant. Cum quibus et nostras voces, ut admitti júbeas, deprecámur, súpplici confessióne dicétes:

IT is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty and everlasting God. That on the Immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin Mary, we should praise, bless and proclaim Thee. For she conceived Thine only-begotten Son by the over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost; and losing not the glory of her virginity, gave forth to the world the everlasting light, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through whom the angels praise Thy majesty, the dominions worship it, and the powers stand in awe. The heavens and the heavenly hosts, and the blessed seraphim join together in celebrating their joy. With these we pray Thee join our voices also, while we say with lowly praise:

COMMUNION

Gloriósá dicta sunt de te, Mariá: quia fecit tibi magna qui potens est. (T. P. *Alleluia*.)

Glorious things are said of thee, O Mary, for He who is mighty hath done great things unto thee. (P. T. *Alleluia*.)

POSTCOMMUNION

Sacraménta quæ súmpsimus, Dómine Deus noster: illíus in nobis culpæ vúlnera réparent, a qua Immaculátam beátæ Mariæ Conceptionem singuláriter præservásti. Per Dóminum.

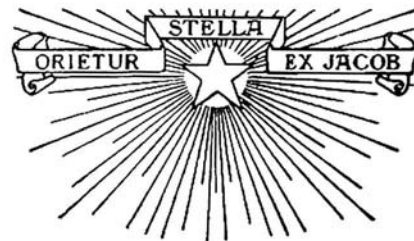
May the sacrament which we have received, O Lord our God, repair in us the wounds of that sin, from which Thou didst in a singular manner preserve the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Mary. Through our Lord.

COMMENTARY ON THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

“Tota pulchra es! O Mary, thou art all fair, unstained by original sin” (*1st Ant. at Vespers; All.*). This cry of admiration, which the Church puts on our lips, expresses the feelings of mankind subject to the evil consequence of sin, before the spotless purity of our Lady. From all eternity God had chosen Mary to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate (*Ep.*); He therefore decked her in holiness (*Int.*), preserving her from all stain and making her a worthy dwelling for His Son (*Collect*). The Blessed Virgin’s perfect redemption which, from the moment of her conception, preserved her from original sin cannot, therefore, be dissociated from our redemption by Christ; and so, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, coming in the course of Advent, heralds the splendours of the Incarnation of the Redeemer.

As we have it to-day, the feast was instituted by Pius IX when he defined the dogma on December 8, 1854. However, a feast of the “Conception” was celebrated long before; it is found in the East in the eighth century, in Ireland in the ninth and in England in the eleventh century. These feasts are evidence of the traditional veneration of Mary’s spotless holiness; Pius IX’s definition only reaffirmed and defined the meaning of the Church’s traditional belief.

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*The Immaculate Conception*