

En la lectura del Génesis, Dios promete enviar a alguien que herirá la cabeza de la serpiente que engañó a la humanidad haciéndola dudar de la bondad de Dios, conduciéndola así al pecado. El Evangelio nos muestra a Dios cumpliendo esa promesa. ¿Por qué lo hizo así y cómo funcionó? Estas preguntas son clave para comprender la importancia de la Inmaculada Concepción de María.

La Inmaculada Concepción de María es como un botón de reinicio. Dios no destruyó la creación para empezar de cero. Permitió que una de sus criaturas, María, fuera el punto de partida de una creación restaurada. Dios obró a través de la Inmaculada María para recrear la bondad original de la creación. Esas condiciones fueron necesarias para que naciera el nuevo hombre, Jesús, para que a través de él todo pudiera ser purificado de la mancha del pecado y todos pudiéramos tener la esperanza de la vida eterna en la perfección del cielo.

Por la gracia especial que le fue otorgada y su "sí" al plan de Dios para liberarnos de la trampa de la serpiente, María es la más poderosa de todas las criaturas de Dios. Recordemos que Jesús no es una criatura. Bajo su advocación de la Inmaculada Concepción, es la patrona de nuestra nación y nuestra arquidiócesis. Bajo su advocación de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, celebrada el viernes, es la patrona de las Américas. Su advocación de Madre de Dios, celebrada el primero de enero, revela la verdadera identidad de su hijo Jesús. Por todo esto y más, démosle la alabanza y el honor que le corresponde.

In the Genesis reading, God makes a promise to send someone who will strike at the head of the serpent who tricked humanity into doubting God's goodness and thereby lead us into sin. The gospel shows us God keeping that promise. Why did God choose to do it this way and how did it work? Those questions are the key to understanding the importance of the Immaculate conception of Mary.

\*In a sermon, Saint Anselm praised Mary because everything in creation rejoices that through her they are in some sense restored to their lost beauty and are endowed with a new grace. These great blessings spring from the blessed fruit of Mary's womb, Jesus. Anselm goes on to speak about how God, the creator of all things, made himself a son of one his creature. "The whole universe was created by God and God was born of Mary...He who could create all things from nothing would not remake his ruined creation without Mary...Without God's Son, nothing could exist; without Mary's Son, nothing could be redeemed." So

basically Anselm is praising Mary for saying yes to God's invitation to participate in his plan for our redemption.

\*\*In another sermon, Saint John Chrysostom explains how this rescue mission was accomplished. Christ conquered the devil using the same means and the same weapons that the devil used to conquer us. The symbols of our fall were a virgin, a tree, and death. The virgin was Eve (she had not yet known man, and she—like everything else—was created free from the stain of sin); then there was the tree (knowledge of good and evil); and death was Adam's penalty. Those three tokens of our destruction became the tokens of our victory. Instead of Eve there was Mary—who had not known man and through a grace given especially to her was conceived free from the stain of original sin. Instead of the tree of knowledge of good and evil there was the wood of the cross; instead of Adam's death, the death of Jesus. The devil was defeated by the very means he used to conquer. By a tree the devil laid Adam low, and by a tree Christ defeated him. At the center of this battle are the two virgins: Eve and Mary. Eve—although she knew better—listened to the devil's lies, picked the fruit and gave it to Adam and death—separation from God—followed. Eve doubted God; Mary trusted God, said yes to God, and gave birth to our redemption.

The immaculate conception of Mary is like a reset button. God didn't destroy creation and start over. He allowed one of his creatures, Mary, to be the starting point of a restored creation. God worked through Immaculate Mary to recreate the original goodness of creation. Those conditions were necessary for the new man—Jesus—to be born so that through him everything could be purified of the stain of sin and we can all have hope of eternal life in the perfection of heaven.

Because of the special grace given to her and her "yes" to God's plan to deliver us from the serpent's trap, Mary is the most powerful of all of God's creatures. Remember that Jesus is not a creature. Under her title of the Immaculate Conception, she is the patroness of our nation and our archdiocese. Under her title Our Lady of Guadalupe—celebrated on Friday—she is the patroness of the Americas. Her title Mother of God—celebrated on January 1st—reveals the true identity of her son Jesus. For all of this and more, let us give her the praise and honor which she is due.

Hail Mary...

\*Liturgy of the Hours volume 1, Office of Readings. Second reading for December 8

\*\*Liturgy of the Hours volumes 3 and 4, Office of Readings. 3rd option for the 2nd reading, Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturdays