

The Woman, Mary Immaculate...

When God willed to become Man, He had to decide on the time of His coming, the country in which He would be born, the city in which He would be raised, the people, the race, the political and economic systems that would surround Him, the language He would speak, and the psychological attitudes with which He would come in contact as the Lord of History and the Savior of the World.

All these details would depend entirely on one factor: the woman who would be His Mother. To choose a mother is to choose a social position, a language, a city, an environment, a crisis, and a destiny.

His Mother was not like ours, whom we accepted as something historically fixed which we could not change; He was born of a Mother whom He chose before He was born. ... We should not be surprised that she is spoken of as a thought by God before the world was made. When Whistler painted the picture of his mother, did he not have the image of her in his mind before he ever gathered his colors on his palette? If you could have preexisted your mother (not artistically, but really), would you not have made her the most perfect woman that ever lived—one so beautiful she would have been the sweet envy of all women, and one so gentle and so merciful that all other mothers would have sought to imitate her virtues? Why, then, should we think that God would do otherwise?

(Fulton J. Sheen, THE WORLD'S FIRST LOVE, Mary, Mother of God, Ignatius Press, Pgs. 14-15.)

How awesome! Jesus' Mother spoken of as a thought by God before the world was made! Who can deny Mary her role as Co-Redemptrix of the human race when you understand she was in God's plan for our salvation before the world was made! God knew of Adam and Eve's sin and already resolved to repair it with a new Adam and a new Eve before it even happened. Hence, we see the **why** of the Immaculate Conception, that extraordinary and singular privilege by which God would fashion a **new Woman** to give her all pure flesh to His Son, the new Adam. She was destined to carry Him in her womb as the New Ark of a New Covenant and to gift Him to a world so wounded by sin so He might restore our fallen nature beyond its original glory. The God-become-man is the only Mediator who can reconcile us with God. While some in our culture see Jesus' address to Our Lady as "**Woman**" in a derogatory way, it is not so with God. When He refers to Our Lady as "**The Woman**," as in Genesis, He is acknowledging her most stupendous role as Co-Redemptrix, not taken from His side as the first Eve was from the side of Adam but standing at His side in crushing the head of satan. When Jesus' Mother called on him to supply more wine at the wedding feast at Cana, Jesus said: "**Woman, what is that to you and me?**" Jesus is not demeaning her but is glorifying her as one who has favor from Heaven to effect the start of His public life and the fulfillment of His mission on earth,



knowing it would take them both to the hill and horror of Calvary. He is affirming her role as intercessor on our behalf and Mediatrix of His grace. When St. John describes **the Woman with child** in his Revelations, he speaks of **this Woman, the Mother of the Redeemer**, before whom satan is totally powerless. No wonder satan hates this woman so! **This Woman is the Immaculate One, Virgin-Mother of the Most Holy Son of God** who walks with Him from conception to Calvary. **This Woman is the closest thing to God because she is the closest thing to the Son of God, His Mother, the Immaculate Virgin.** Her first singular privilege was her divine maternity, and because of that holy vocation, she was conceived without sin, Her Immaculate Conception, and preserved and totally consecrated to God for His purpose and delight in Perpetual Virginity. This enormous role in the plan of salvation will merit her glorious Assumption, and the not yet defined title as Co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix of Grace, our constant Advocate before God. She is our solitary boast and God's most precious treasure after His own Son. Her soul greatly magnifies the Lord!

It is fitting to reflect upon the mystic, Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich's vision of the creation of Mary's most holy soul.

I had a vision of the creation of Mary's most holy soul and of its being united to her most pure body. In the glory by which the Most Holy Trinity is usually represented in my visions I saw a movement like a great shining mountain, and yet also like a human figure; and I saw something rise out of the midst of this figure towards its mouth and go forth from it like a shining brightness. Then I saw this brightness standing separate before the Face of God, turning and shaping itself—or rather being shaped, for I saw that while this brightness took human form, yet it was by the Will of God that it received a form so unspeakably beautiful. I saw, too, that God showed the beauty of this soul to the angels, and that they had unspeakable joy in its beauty. I am unable to describe in words all that I saw and understood. ...

In the moment when the new-born child lay in the arms of her holy mother Anna, I saw that at the same time the child was presented in heaven in the sight of the Most Holy Trinity and greeted with unspeakable joy by all the heavenly host. Then I understood that there was made known to her in a supernatural manner her whole future with all her joys and sorrows. Mary was taught infinite mysteries, and yet was and remained a child. This knowledge of hers we cannot understand, because our knowledge grows on the tree of good and evil. She knew everything in the same way as a child knows its mother's breast and that it is to drink from it. As the vision faded in which I saw the child Mary being thus taught in heaven through grace, I heard her weep for the first time. (Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, Templegate, Springfield, IL, 1954, Pgs. 73 and 77.)

Not only did God fashion **this Woman** to be Mother to His Son, but to be Mother to us all, the new Eve, mother of all the living. The new nation of America was consecrated to Mary since the mid-sixteenth century when the Spanish missionaries first came to America, especially around the coast of Florida. The Basilica of the Immaculate

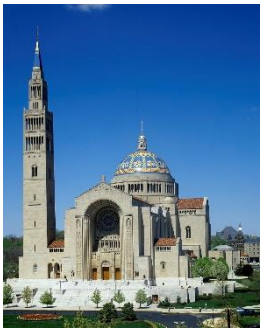
Conception in Jacksonville, Florida, was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception in 1584. John Carroll, the first bishop in the United States, placed his diocese of Baltimore, which encompassed the thirteen colonies, under the patronage of Mary with his pastoral letter of May 28, 1792. In 1846 the Sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore named Mary, under the title of her Immaculate Conception, Patroness of America. While Blessed Pope Pius IX approved that decision in 1847, he did not promulgate the dogma of the Immaculate Conception until December 8, 1854 with his encyclical **INEFFABILIS DEUS**.



Murillo's Immaculate Conception in the Patronal Church

Between February 11 and July 16, 1858, Our Lady appeared to Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France, and identified herself as **“I am the Immaculate Conception”**. What an expression of approval and pleasure in the actions of her beloved sons! Certainly that explains why Our Lady came to America to thank us for our devotion to her under her title of the Immaculate Conception on September 25, 1956, first as Our Lady of Lourdes, focusing on the primacy of her role as Patroness of America. It was the next day, September 26, 1956, that she gave us the added favor of showing herself under a new image, identifying herself as **“I am Our Lady of America.”** The next day, September 27, 1956, Our Lady appeared weeping over the world, saying: **“I am the Immaculate One, Patroness of your land. Be my faithful children as I have been your faithful Mother.”**

On October 5, 1956, she inspired Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil to write ***The Prayer to the Immaculate Conception***. On October 13, 1956, she appeared holding a replica of the finished shrine of the Immaculate Conception, even though it was not yet finished, and said:



“This is my shrine, my daughter. I am very pleased with it. Tell my children I thank them. Let them finish it quickly and make it a place of special pilgrimage. It will be a place of wonders. I promise this. I will bless all those who, either by prayers, labor, or material aid, help to erect this shrine.”

On November 11, 1956, Our Lady taught Sister the little prayer, **“By thy Holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, deliver us from evil.”** On August 22, 1957, feast of the Immaculate Heart, Our Lady spoke of her role as Mediatrix of Grace. **“My heart, my Immaculate Heart, is the channel through which the graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men.”** On February 11, 1958, Our Lady stated to Sister Mildred Neuzil: **“My Immaculate Heart will win in the end, and the Spirit of Christ will dwell in the hearts of men. Those in whom this Spirit is not found will be condemned to eternal hellfire.”** On that same day Our Lady stated:

“I am the Mother of the sacred humanity, and it is my special work as co-redemptrix of the human race to help souls reach the sanctity of the Father in eternal union by showing them how to put on Christ, to imbibe His Spirit, and thus become one with Him.” (Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, Tiffin, Ohio, Pages 13, 14, 18, 23 and 24.)

What has Our Lady of America asked for in return for all her favor? Simply to enthrone a statue of her in this new image in **Her Shrine, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., our Patronal Church, after being carried in a solemn procession, and then honor her there as “Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin.** Surely that is not too much to ask. It must be evident, **since Our Lady asked for no other shrine or pilgrimage site but this one,** that this devotion must be centered in our Patronal Church! Can Our Lady be any clearer in her request? It is over 67 years since Our Lady has asked for this.

“My daughter, will my children in America listen to my pleadings and console my Immaculate Heart? Will my loyal sons carry out my desires and thus help me bring the peace of Christ once again to mankind.” (Diary, Page 15.)

**Copyright© Our Lady of America Devotion, Tiffin, Ohio,
feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2023.
All rights reserved.**