

## 8 December – Immaculate Conception

SOLEMNITY; white

*This feast had its origin in the East as the “Conception of Mary by Saint Anne”. It spread through the West during the Middle Ages as the “Immaculate Conception” and was extended to the entire Western Church in the eighteenth century. The feast celebrates Mary, preserved from sin from the moment of conception; she is the first fruits of her Son’s redemption and a prophetic model of what the Church is called to be.*

### *First Reading † Genesis 3:9-15.20*

#### **A reading from the book of Genesis**

*I will put enmity between your offspring and her offspring.*

After Adam had eaten of the tree, the Lord God called to him.

‘Where are you?’ he asked.

‘I heard the sound of you in the garden,’ he replied.

‘I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.’

‘Who told you that you were naked?’ he asked.

‘Have you been eating of the tree I forbade you to eat?’

The man replied,

‘It was the woman you put with me;  
she gave me the fruit, and I ate it.’

Then the Lord God asked the woman,

‘What is this you have done?’

The woman replied,

‘The serpent tempted me and I ate.’

Then the Lord God said to the serpent,

‘Because you have done this,

‘Be accursed beyond all cattle,  
all wild beasts.

You shall crawl on your belly and eat dust  
every day of your life.

I will make you enemies of each other:

you and the woman,

your offspring and her offspring.

It will crush your head

and you will strike its heel.’

The man named his wife ‘Eve’ because she was the mother of all those who live.

The word of the Lord.

### *Responsorial † Psalm 97:1-4*

***Sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvellous deeds.***

Sing a new song to the Lord  
for he has worked wonders.  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have brought salvation.

***Sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvellous deeds.***

The Lord has made known his salvation;  
has shown his justice to the nations.  
He has remembered his truth and love  
for the house of Israel.

***Sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvellous deeds.***

All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.  
Shout to the Lord all the earth,  
ring out your joy.

***Sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvellous deeds.***

***Second Reading † Ephesians 1:3-6.11-12***

**A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians**

*God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.*

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us  
with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.  
Before the world was made,  
he chose us, chose us in Christ,  
to be holy and spotless,  
and to live through love in his presence,  
determining that we should become  
his adopted sons, through Jesus Christ,  
for his own kind purposes,  
to make us praise the glory of his grace,  
his free gift to us in the Beloved.  
And it is in him we were claimed as God's own,  
chosen from the beginning,  
under the predetermined plan  
of the one who guides all things  
as he decides by his own will;  
chosen to be,  
for his greater glory,  
the people who would put their hopes in Christ  
before he came.

The word of the Lord.

*Gospel Acclamation † cf Luke 1:28*

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you;  
blessed are you among women.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

*Gospel † Luke 1:26-38*

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke**

*Rejoice, favoured one, the Lord is with you.*

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her,

'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'

She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her,

'Mary, do not be afraid;  
you have won God's favour. Listen!  
You are to conceive and bear a son,  
and you must name him Jesus.  
He will be great and will be called  
Son of the Most High.  
The Lord God will give him  
the throne of his ancestor David;  
he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever  
and his reign will have no end.'

Mary said to the angel,

'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?'

'The Holy Spirit will come upon you'

the angel answered

'and the power of the Most High

will cover you with its shadow.

And so the child will be holy

and will be called Son of God.

Know this too:

your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age,

herself conceived a son,

and she whom people called barren

is now in her sixth month,

for nothing is impossible to God.'

'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary,

'Let what you have said be done to me.'

And the angel left her.

The Gospel of the Lord.