

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY - DECEMBER 8, 2025

Adam and Eve had an incredible gift. From the first moment they came to life, they were in a close, personal friendship with God. He wasn't some distant figure to them. He was as real as the air they breathed. They *knew* how good and loving He was. Everything they did — every thought, every word, every action — flowed naturally from their love for Him.

Because their relationship with God was right, they were at peace inside themselves. Adam loved Eve because she was God's gift to him. Eve loved Adam because she saw God's image shining in him. And together, they lived in harmony with the beautiful paradise around them. It was truly heaven on earth — a world that perfectly reflected the goodness and love of its Creator.

But then everything fell apart. Adam and Eve let the devil twist their thoughts and make them doubt God's love. He convinced them that God was holding something back — that they couldn't really trust the One who had given them everything. Before they knew it, they were believing the lie that happiness could be found in disobeying God.

And the result was tragic. That first act of disobedience — what we call *original sin* — shattered everything. Paradise was lost. Friendship with God was no longer easy or natural. God suddenly seemed far away. The harmony between man and woman broke down. Even creation itself stopped working the way it was meant to.

That wound — original sin — didn't just affect Adam and Eve. It's something we've all inherited. We all feel it inside. We want to do what's good, but so often we end up doing what's wrong. Sometimes we're not even sure what "good" is anymore. We long for peace with others, but selfishness and pride keep getting in the way. Instead of putting God at the center, we want the world to revolve around *us*. We want God to serve *our* plans, not the other way around.

But today, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, we celebrate the moment God began to turn that story around. Mary, like Adam and Eve, was conceived without original sin. But unlike them, she didn't turn away from God — she said "yes." She put her whole life at the service of His plan. Because she was free from that wound of sin, she could give herself completely to God and freely accept her role as the mother of the Savior. And through her "yes," Jesus — the Son of the Most High — entered the world to save us. That's why we call Mary the *New Eve* — the mother of all those who are reborn in Christ.

Now, we weren't conceived without original sin like Mary, but this feast still means something important for us. It reminds us that God doesn't just forgive sin — He gives us the power to *overcome* it. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, our sins are wiped away. And through the Holy Spirit, we receive the strength to live good and holy lives. As Saint Paul tells us, God has blessed us with "every spiritual blessing in the heavens" so that we might be "holy and without blemish before Him."

Yes, we're weak. Yes, we fall. But we're never without hope. The same God who preserved Mary from sin and who sent Jesus to bear our guilt can free us too — can teach us how to live

with peace and joy again.

Mary was the first to experience that restored friendship with God, but it's not just for her — it's for all of us. We only have to do what she did: say “yes” and trust God's plan. It won't always be easy, but it's the only path to a life that's truly full of meaning and hope.

So today, we don't just honor what God did *in* Mary — we try to follow her example *in our own lives*. And we're not alone in that. She's in heaven praying for us, bringing our needs to her Son, who never fails to listen to her.

God, in His mercy, has turned even the wound of original sin into an opportunity for grace — by sending us such a great Savior, and such a loving Mother. That is the meaning of redemption. God restores what was lost. He began that great work in Mary. Jesus' death and resurrection made it possible. And we will experience it in all its fullness when we enter into Heaven - a paradise that can never be lost.