

Timothy J. Grassi

## Immaculate Conception (B) 2020

The book of Genesis gives us the creation story and I think it often is kind of breezed over because we know the gist of it and we just give it a cursive listen. But, in reality, what we just heard is very important, and especially for today's feast of the Immaculate Conception. What we just heard was the story of our first parents and the relationship they had with God. It was a beautiful, loving and harmonious relationship until the devil came along disguised as a serpent. The devil was jealous of our first parents and their closeness with God, so the devil talked them into rebelling against God. Thus, as St. Paul said, "Sin entered the world," a sin that seems to have become part of our DNA. Of course, we call it *Original Sin*. It's not like something attached to us, rather, it is more like a lack of something, something important is missing, which is the original grace which God blessed us with at the time of creation. This OS is a kind of tendency in all of us to pride, selfishness, and self-centeredness. It leads us to rebel against God as our first parents did. It means that our relationship with God is not what it could or should be and our relationship with each other is also, somehow broken. However, God does not want us to remain alienated so He tells the devil (serpent) "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and Hers." Yet sin is a powerful force, one that humanity is unable to conquer by its own power or cleverness and so, God sent His Son to come to our rescue. God's Son took on our human nature to show us the way back to a loving, harmonious relationship with God.

This is where today's feast becomes exciting, because it is Mary Whom God chose to be the vessel to usher Him into the world. She was "full of grace" from the very first moment of her conception, because she would be the Mother of God. Through Her Immaculate Conception, God preserved Mary from the stain of OS, making her all pure, all holy, and thereby prepared to be the mother of our Savior. For this reason, She is honored by all creatures since she is the only pure creature who has always found favor in the eyes of God. The Immaculate Conception of the BVM leads us to realize and to adore the all powerful God Who overpowered nature in Her. She was saved without ever having been lost. So, we honor our Blessed Mother and Her Immaculate Conception which made Her so precious in the eyes of God. We can receive assistance from Her in all our needs. It would be impossible for God to refuse Her anything. His divine and loving glance never left her since she always lived according to His will. We must be convinced that He is always ready to grant whatever She requests because She asks for nothing that is

not for His glory and our good! In our weakness and sin, Mary is a sign of hope. She defeated the devil every time and proved that God gives us a way out of every temptation and that His grace is always sufficient for us. Mary is a sign that we don't ever have to sin again, that we can expect to be freed from long-time sins, and that Jesus' victory is for us now. Mother Mary, the Immaculate Conception, thank you for being such a beautiful model of what it means to live in the grace that God has lavished upon you and may we always say yes to God as you did.