



Treasures of Our Faith

By: Deacon Ryan

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The **Immaculate Conception** is the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in her mother's womb, free from all stain of original sin.

Although the belief that Mary was sinless and conceived immaculate has been widely held since the early days of the Church, the doctrine was not dogmatically defined until 1854, by Pope Pius IX - *Ineffabilis Deus*.

We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore should firmly and constantly be believed by all the faithful. —Pope Pius IX, Ineffabilis Deus, December 8, 1854.

We as the Catholic Church, come together to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8 of every year.

The feast days of the Church are not only the commemoration of historical events; they do not look only to our past, they very much encourage and inspire us to look to the present time and they can help give us an insight into our own relationship with God as well as giving inspiration to us that we can then apply in our own lives.

Mary's life was indeed so inspirational, her life exemplified true morality and she shows us how to love unconditionally. Devotion to Mary instills in us compassion, tenderness, gentleness and strength, not just for our families and friends but for all the children of God. For us, Mary is a symbol of Church. As a disciple, Mary was at the foot of the cross all her life, just as all of us disciples are called to be, we are all called to be there with her. Mary's presence is often times seen in her love for those the world tends to forget, Mary is the original option for the poor, an option each one of us are also called to live out. Devotion to Mary must be rooted in the concerns of the world, with equality, justice, and mercy in mind. Ultimately, any and all devotions must always lead us to glorifying God. This is why Mary intercedes for us and is always pointing us in the direction of her Son Jesus. We learn from Mary how to be a true disciple and a blessing for others...