

## **The Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary December 8, 2021**

From the moment Mary began to exist in the womb of her mother, Anne, Mary was free from any desire to hurt God or others. In fact, she shared God's desire to love others. What she wanted more than anything else was to please God in everything she did, said, and thought.

God gave Mary this gift for a reason - so that she could be the mother of Jesus. God wanted Mary to be a part of bringing Jesus into the world so that He could show people how much He loved them. We hear about this in today's gospel reading. The angel Gabriel tells Mary about God's desire to involve her in bringing about a Kingdom that will have no end. Because Mary loves God, she replies, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." So, because of her "yes", Jesus was born.

And, because God wanted to make Mary part of His plan for our salvation, He also gave her everything she needed to succeed. He gave her the special gift of a pure, loving heart so that she could be the mother of Jesus who would teach us the way to love.

This gift that God gave Mary from the moment she was conceived teaches us something about what God wants for us. He wants us to also have loving hearts. He wants us to also want nothing more than to please Him. He wants us to also do good for the people around us. He also wants to have a friendship with us that is close and personal. Mary always had this friendship with God and never lost it. Through Mary's son, Jesus, we who have lost that friendship because of our hurtful words and selfish actions can be close to God again.

Saint Paul assures us of this in today's second reading: "[God] chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him." This has been God's plan all along. Mary enjoyed it from the first moment of her existence. God is making it a reality in us whenever we turn away from what is bad and turn toward Him and His goodness.

God called Mary to be part of His plan to save the world. He gave her everything she needed to succeed. The same is true for us. God calls us to help Him reach people with His love. We do that by praying for others. We do that by helping others. He is waiting for our "yes". Then the God for whom nothing is impossible, will do great things through us, and we will find our joy in being part of His great work of renewing the universe in Jesus Christ.