



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

The Immaculate Conception

Incomprehensible sinlessness

Readings: *Genesis 3:9-15, 20, Ps 97, Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12, Luke 1:26-38*

To the sinful sinlessness is incomprehensible.

To the sinner, bearing the dark stain of Adam, immaculacy is a mystery that takes us back beyond our origins and to the other side of the final purification. To all of us humans who, in our exiled imperfections, have passed on the 'happy fault, the necessary sin of Adam', of which the great Easter hymn speaks it is impossible to conceive, either metaphorically or biologically, of such a glorious liberation from the death dealing reality of our separation from the holiness and eternal nature of God.

It is why this feast day is so important. For in it and by it the Church teaches us of the extraordinary lengths to which God has gone to effect our salvation and win us back. The Sovereign Lord of all has deigned to dwell in our humanity but the humanity He comes to dwell in must be unsullied by the Fall of Man. Thus, to inherit both the Godhead and the humanity, the Mother of God, must be pure, free from sin. The Christ child is to be perfect and fully God and perfect and fully Man. Nothing else will do to effect the

rescue of the death bound. So Mary is granted Immaculacy from the moment of her conception. Such is the Providence of God.

But there is another puzzle that God alone can resolve. For Mary must not be different from us in the matter of our salvation. Thus she is saved by the sacrifice of Her Son on the Cross. It pre-empts her. And here we are further mystified. For we know, both logically and historically, that Christ's death comes long after His Blessed Mother's conception.

Those of us who are locked in time cannot truly imagine eternity. But what we now know, courtesy of post-Einsteinian science, is both the possibility of infinity, the utter plausibility of eternity and its interface with time.

God, who declared Himself to Moses as the I AM, the essential Being dwelling in the eternal NOW, is more than capable of applying the salvific reality of the sacrifice of His only begotten Son to the creation of the God-bearer, Mary.

There are places where time and eternity intersect. The Immaculate Conception is one of them. The altar is another. Mass, therefore, is always the fitting celebration of this great mystery of our salvation. God has freed His people from the slavery of sin and from the deadly constraints of linear time. He has done this through Our Lady and made it all possible by Jesus.