



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary-December 8th
2019

Many years ago I found myself, by invitation, at a meeting of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was, it turned out, mainly an Anglican outing for high churchmen who liked that sort of thing. At the end of the meeting I asked two elderly canons why, given their stand, they had not become Catholics. Their reply was 'The Immaculate Conception'. I was puzzled. Didn't they believe it? 'Oh, Yes.' was the reply, 'but we can't accept it as *de fide*.' (i.e. you have to believe it as essential to the Faith). I could vaguely sympathise because, as a much younger man I had assumed that all of these Marian doctrines were 'bolt-on extras', inessential to the reality of our faith in Jesus and just part of the Catholic fetish with Mary.

Having to encounter the enormous and glorious reality of Mary was, as you will not be surprised to hear, part of the process of my conversion from the peculiarity of Protestantism and its cult of private opinion to the teaching of the Universal Church.

Three things convinced me.

- 1) Mary, if not Immaculate, would simply have passed on her sinful nature to her son, Jesus. It would then be impossible for Him to save us.
- 2) Did this mean that Mary was the only person who did not need the sacrifice of Christ for her salvation? No. What it did mean was that the

eternal God could anticipate the sacrifice and apply its benefits to someone historically before the event. (That God could create Immaculacy is not in doubt because He created Eve. But that He sought to save without the atoning sacrifice of Christ would be no more than a divine conjuring trick.

3) Does Scripture confirm or deny or remain silent on this great subject?

In Luke's account of the Annunciation the Gospeller uses a key and confirmatory word in Greek. It is the word by which the angel greets Mary.

'Hail..... YOU WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN FILLED WITH THE GRACE OF GOD.'

God has prepared her to be the Mother of His only Son.

The Salvation of Man now rests upon Our Lady's response.

Let me close with the words of St. Anselm from today's Office of Readings:

ST. ANSELM:

'God, who could create all things from nothing, would not remake his ruined creation without Mary.

God, then, is the Father of the created world and Mary the mother of the re-created world. God is the Father by whom all things were given life, and Mary the mother through whom all things were given new life. For God begot the Son, through whom all things were made, and Mary gave birth to him as the Saviour of the world. Without God's Son, nothing could exist; without Mary's Son, nothing could be redeemed.