



Vox Populi

07 December 2023

Tomorrow, on 8 December, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A feast called the Conception of Mary arose in the Eastern Church in the seventh century. It reached the West in the eighth century. In the 11th century, it received its present name, the Immaculate Conception. By the 18th century, it became a feast of the universal Church and is now recognised as a solemnity. In 1854, Pope Pius IX's solemn declaration, 'Ineffabilis Deus,' clarified with finality the long-held belief of the Church that Mary was conceived free from original sin. Mary was granted this extraordinary privilege because of her unique role in history as the Mother of God. That is, she received the gift of salvation in Christ from the very moment of her conception.

Even though Mary is unique in all humanity for being born without sin, she is held up by the Church as a model for all humanity in her holiness and purity and her willingness to accept the Plan of God for her.

Every person is called to recognise and respond to God's call to their own vocation to carry out God's plan for their life and fulfil the mission prepared for them since before the beginning of time. Mary's 'Let it be done to me according to Thy Word,' in response to the Angel Gabriel's greeting, is the response required of all Christians to God's Plan.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a time to celebrate the great joy of God's gift to humanity in Mary and to recognise with greater clarity the truth that each and every human being has been created by God to fulfil a particular mission that only He can fulfil.