

Integral Faith

"Homily helps and liturgy resources highlighting care for our common home."



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Homily Helps and Petitions for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (December 8, 2022)

Homily Helps

† Scripture Passages to Note:

Genesis 3: I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.

Psalms 98: Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds....All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God.

Ephesians 1: [God] has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him.

Luke 1: "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."

† Comments for the Day:

Most people are familiar with the account of the sin in Eden. However, the continued struggle between good and evil found in the broader story is often overlooked. One familiar interpretation of this struggle is the statue of Mary under the title "Immaculate Conception," which has her heel on the head of the serpent. However, the biblical text states that it will be the heel of her offspring that will crush the serpent. That offspring is Jesus.

One might wonder what such a story has to do with the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Actually, the reference to continued struggle found in this account and the unparalleled privilege of Mary commemorated by this solemnity really focus our attention on Jesus. It is he, the sinless one, who took up the ongoing struggle between good and evil. It is he who, for our sake, crushed the head of that evil. The Responsorial Psalm picks up the theme of victory, a victory that was won in the past yet continues to unfold in the present: "All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God."

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul states that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. If we have been made holy and without blemish before God, how much more unblemished should be the one who formed the savior in her very body?

Although the gospel reading recounts the conception of Jesus rather than of Mary, the character of her conception (holy, without blemish) sets the stage for the mystery of his conception (holy, the Son of God). The heavenly messenger announces Mary's uniqueness at the very beginning of his exchange with her; she is called "full of grace," and the Lord is with her. The body of the one

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destined to crush the serpent will take form in her body. This mysterious feat is accomplished quite simply: she replies, "May it be done."

Would that our faith were as simple and as complete as Mary's, to fulfill our own individual calling – like those who have accepted Pope Francis' challenge to care for our common home by using less energy, conserving natural resources, advocating for environmental justice or climate action, or starting a care-for-creation ministry. Regardless of our own calling, the first step is for each of us to respond, "May it be done."

† **Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:**

One Person of the Trinity entered into the created cosmos, throwing in his lot with it, even to the cross. (99)

There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions [that] reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. (211)

Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. ... In [Mary's] glorified body, together with the Risen Christ, part of creation has reached the fullness of its beauty. (241)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we might come to realize that it is through our human bodies that we encounter and give glory to God, let us pray to the Lord ...

Option 2: That we might come to see that we are connected with Mary through the various elements of creation that we share on earth, our common home, let us pray to the Lord ...

Further Resources

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Webpage: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help

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