



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**DIOCESE**  
**OF CHARLESTON**  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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December 8, 2022

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, a day in which we remember the conception of Mary, a doctrine that is rooted in Scripture and our tradition.

The solemnity was instilled by Pope Pius IX in 1854, in the apostolic constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* (*ineffable God*), which stated:

“We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.”

The celebration of the Immaculate Conception is intentionally placed during the season of Advent and prepares us for the birth of Christ. It is through Mary that we are given the God-man, Jesus the Christ, sent to save us. At the center of salvation history is her resounding “yes.”

“Mary, as God conceived of her and desired her in his inscrutable plan [is] a creature filled with divine love, all goodness, all beauty, all holiness,” St. John Paul II wrote. “In her heart there is no shade of selfishness: she desires nothing for herself except God’s glory and human salvation. For her, the very privilege of being preserved from original sin is not a reason to boast, but one for total service to her Son’s redemptive mission.”

Mary is the model of Christian expectation and hope. Through her complete act of trust in acceptance of God’s will, she brought the Christ Child into our world. May we all grow closer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to imitate her profound faith and obedience to the Creator of all things, and to bring the light of Christ into the world.

Hail Mary, full of grace, pray for us.

In Christ’s Love,

Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS  
*Bishop of Charleston*