
MI MONTHLY FORMATION (2)
In Fr. Kolbe's Marian and Missionary Spirituality



FEBRUARY 2007 PRAYER INTENTION:

That all men and women recognize our gift that we are the crown of God's creation and so live to praise and glorify Him.

Dear Friends and MI Members,

“I am the Immaculate Conception.” This is how Mary revealed herself to the simple peasant Bernadette in Lourdes, France in 1858. As MI members this is the most beautiful title of Our Lady revealing her intimate relationship with each of the Three Divine Persons in the Blessed Trinity. The Immaculate Conception is pure gift in which Mary is prepared to become the Mother of Christ. We will celebrate this apparition on February 11th.

It is the title that Fr. Kolbe contemplated, “What does it mean to be immaculately conceived?” In his contemplation of her name and her words at Lourdes he began to understand the mystery about God that is revealed in Mary. The Church proclaimed in 1854 the dogma of the Immaculate Conception stating that from her conception Mary was free from all stain of sin. She had been conceived immaculately through the power of God and the redemptive grace of Christ in view of her role as Mother of God.

It was William of Ware, a Franciscan theologian, and Duns Scotus (1308), another Franciscan and disciple of William, who presented the final argument before the Church for the proclamation of the dogma.

The arguments of the Franciscan school are two:

1) God could make Mary immaculate from her conception. It was fitting that the Mother of God was immaculate from her conception, therefore, God made her Immaculate from her conception. In Latin this argument is summarized in the verbs: *Potuit* (to be able), *Decuit* (to desire), *Ergo Fecit* (therefore it was done).

2) Christ is the most perfect Redeemer. A redemption that preserves from sin is more perfect than one that frees from it. Mary was redeemed by Jesus Christ. The way of her redemption is by preserving her from the common law of original sin transmitted by the natural conception.

All is present to God; therefore, even the redemptive act of His Son. God anticipated in time what Christ, in time, would do and applied those redemptive graces to Mary. He pre-redeemed Mary through Christ. A simple analogy is that we are born with original sin on our souls and carry its effects. We are imprisoned and only through the Baptism are we set free, carrying with us the effect of once being in prison. Rather at the conception of Mary the redemptive grace of Christ is applied to her soul making her untouchable to Satan. Christ's power is greater than his evil. She never was in prison, but was preserved from going to prison.

Mary's soul then is in union with God. She is an open free vessel, open to His workings and His Spirit. She lives in contemplation of His Word and His ways. What God has done for Mary He wishes to do also for us. He wishes to set us free. In Mary's Immaculate Conception we find such hope, knowing the untouchable power of Christ over evil.

Let us contemplate this greatest of mysteries in this month as we prepare to see the action/response of Mary to God's call (*in the March Monthly Formation*). You see, even in preparing this month's formation I was reminded how great God is. That He is Almighty and that He has wonderfully beautifully made Mary as the Mother of Christ and our Mother.

Ann O'Donnell

Fr. Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculata

FKMinCAL@aol.com

PERSONAL REFLECTION AND READING:

- CCC #490-494.
- One More Gift, Fr. Luigi Faccenda, Immaculata Press, West Covina, CA, 1990, pp. 15-16.
- Spend some time in quiet and imagine what Mary in her Immaculate Conception must look like.
- Think what your life would be like without any sin. This exercise is suggested in order to increase your desire to avoid sin in your life.
- As a preparation for confession this Lent, ask Mary, through her Immaculate Conception, to open your soul to God's redemptive grace in order to overcome that predominate sin or fault.
- Rent or borrow the video on the *Song of Bernadette* and invite some friends or family to watch it with you.

QUOTE:

“The fact that she is totally with God is the reason why she is so close to human beings. For this reason she can be the Mother of every consolation and every help, a Mother whom anyone can dare to address in any kind of need in weakness and in sin, for she has understanding for everything and is for everyone the open power of creative goodness. In her, God has impressed his own image.”

--Pope Benedict XVI

DATES TO REMEMBER

- **FEBRUARY** -

- 2** The Presentation of the Lord (Feast)
- 3** First Saturday of the Month
- 11** World Day of the Sick – Our Lady of Lourdes
- 21** Ash Wednesday – Day of Fast and Abstinence

FEBRUARY 2-4

1st MI National weekend Retreat in Spanish at Marytown

FEBRUARY 24-25

MI National Board Meeting in California

REFLECTION:

A few of us Missionaries coordinated a High School Confirmation program at which the students were required to do Christian service hours. We offered them the chance to help clients at the local institution of the mentally and physically handicapped to Mass on Sunday. A small group of the students participated, amongst whom was Carlos, a defensive lineman on the local football team. I noticed him pushing a gurney with a young man laying flat, his entire body contorted but looking up at Carlos with a radiating smile. The young could not speak. I saw Carlos “contemplating” him. I asked him what he was thinking. “Look at how happy he is. He has no sin on his soul.”