

## Walk in the Light

Advent 2022 at The Madeleine

### Advent Faith Sharing, Therese Fenzl

- ▶ Sundays, Dec. 4, 11 & 18, 11:15 am (In person)
- ▶ Mondays, Dec. 5, 12 & 19, 6:30 pm (Zoom). Email [tfenzl@themadeleine.edu](mailto:tfenzl@themadeleine.edu) for Zoom invitation. ▶ *Page 2*

### Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Thursday, December 8

8:00 am & 2:00 pm Mass—We join on this feast day to celebrate Mary’s ongoing intervention for us and the grace given to her from God, shared through all time and circumstance. ▶ *Page 6–7*

### Reconciliation

No Communal Reconciliation Service this season, but the sacrament is available by appointment. Contact the Parish Office.

### The Madeleine Marketplace

Thursday, December 8 • Parish Hall

2:00 pm, Marketplace •

6:00 pm, Tree Lighting & Carols

Get a jump on holiday shopping, and enjoy food, refreshments, and adult beverages. Photos with Santa, too! ▶ *Page 5*

### Knights’ Annual Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, December 11 • Parish Hall

11:00 am—Great food and fellowship by the Knights of Columbus. ▶ *Page 5*

**More details, events and Christmas Mass times at [www.themadeleine.edu/advent](http://www.themadeleine.edu/advent)**

### A Northwest Christmas II with Bravo! Northwest

Sunday, December 11 • Main Church

3:00 pm—This popular holiday concert features the Bravo! Chorale, Soloists, and Chamber Orchestra in the virtuosic Bach “Magnificat” and highlights from Handel’s “Messiah” as well as your favorite Christmas carols ▶ *Page 4*

### Cello Nutcracker with 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel Universe

Weds., Dec. 14 • Old Madeleine Church

7:00 pm—Six brilliant Cellists, one Nutcracker! Join 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel Universe for this holiday classic, a tradition that always brings smiles and holiday cheer. ▶ *Page 4*

### School Christmas Program

Thursday, December 15 • Main Church

6:30 pm—Join us for this annual family tradition!

### Madeleine Choirs at the Grotto

- ▶ Madeleine Children’s Choir • Friday, December 16, 5:15 pm
- ▶ Madeleine Choir & Chimes • Sunday, December 18, 5:00 pm



Download your Advent devotional book:  
[www.themadeleine.edu/advent](http://www.themadeleine.edu/advent)

## Second Sunday of Advent

In a chaotic world filled with personal, political and often environmental turmoil, it is easy to long for someone coming from the outside to help us, to “fix” things. But today we are reminded that something is also required of us. Preparing for Christ was and is a serious task, involving our own need for hope and repentance. We can look to Jesus for solace and assistance, but we are called to “make straight his paths” and to “produce good fruit as evidence of (our) repentance.” His coming makes great demands on us.

### PRAY FOR OUR FAITHFULLY DEPARTED

- ▶ Kathleen Nims—Funeral December 16
- ▶ Pam Wiggin
- ▶ Sarah Warner
- ▶ Kathleen Gaitan
- ▶ James (Jim) Hopson
- ▶ Jan Sheahan
- ▶ Robert Moriarty

### PRAYER REQUESTS

For those who are ill, or in need of our prayers

- ▶ Auxere Francois
- ▶ Jesse Kissinger
- ▶ Aaron Stevenson
- ▶ Nancy Sharff
- ▶ Mason Lugar
- ▶ Minh Ha Nguyen
- ▶ Bill Stack
- ▶ Dolores Seybold
- ▶ Chadd Garvens

### WORSHIP & PRAYER

- 12/06, Tues. . . . . Peggy Russell
- 12/07, Weds. . . . . Vicky Willis †
- 12/08, Thurs 8:00 am . . . . . Bob Ladu †
- 2:00 pm . . . . . Mary Biewend †
- 12/09, Fri . . . . . Pan Wiggin †
- 12/10, Sat . . . . . Kelly Gorton †
- 12/11, Sun. 8:00 am . . . The Madeleine Community
- 10:00 am . . . . . Peggy Russell

## Calendar This Week

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

- 8:00 am: Mass—Church
- 8:45 am: RCIA—St. Catherine Room
- 8:50 am: Confirmation Class—Fireside Rm
- 10:00 am: Mass—Church  **ALSO LIVESTREAMS**
- 11:15 am: Faith Sharing—Rectory Dining

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

- 6:00 pm: Oregon Bartender's Event—Old Church
- 6:30 pm: FA Meeting—Fireside Rm

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6

- 8:00 am: Mass—Church
- 9:00 am: Adoration—Church
- 10:00 am: Silver Exchange—Rectory Dining
- 3:15 pm: Altar Server Training—Church
- 7:00 pm: Knights of Columbus—Fireside Rm
- 7:00 pm: The Equity Committee

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

- 8:00 am: Mass—Church
- 2:45 pm: Children's Choir Rehearsal
- 5:30 pm: Chimes Rehearsal
- 7:00 pm: Madeleine Choir
- 7:00 pm: Safety and Security—Fireside Rm

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

- ▶ Immaculate Conception Holy Day
- 8:00 am: Mass—Church
- 2:00 pm: Madeleine Marketplace—Parish Hall
- 2:00 pm: School Mass—Church

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

- 8:00 am: Mass—Church

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

- ▶ Retirement Fund for Religious
- 9:30 am: Alzheimer's Group—Fireside Rm
- 5:00 pm: Mass—Church

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

- ▶ Retirement Fund for Religious
- 8:00 am: Mass—Church
- 8:45 am: RCIA—St. Catherine Room
- 8:50 am: Confirmation—Fireside Rm
- 10:00 am: Mass—Church  **ALSO LIVESTREAMS**
- 11:00 am: Pancake Breakfast—Parish Hall
- 11:15 am: Faith Sharing—Rectory Dining
- 3:00 pm: Bravo! Concert—Church

### SAVE THE DATE

- ▶ **The Madeleine Marketplace:** December 8  
themadeleine.edu/marketplace
- ▶ **Ash Wednesday:** February 22

## PARISH LIFE

### SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE, DEC. 7

The Madeleine Safety & Security Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday December 7th from 7 to 8 pm, in the Fireside Room. Appropriate COVID precautions will be followed to ensure the health and well-being of everyone in attendance.

The Madeleine Safety & Security Committee serves in an advisory capacity, supporting the efforts of the school and the Pastoral Council to provide a safe and secure faith experience. The Committee is currently drafting an Emergency Action Plan, providing a framework for

preparedness planning, decision-making, and emergency response to a disaster, pandemic, or other critical events.

The Committee welcomes new members from diverse fields and backgrounds to enrich our discussion and broaden our vision in our efforts to provide for the safety of our Madeleine School children, parents and parishioners. If you have an interest in becoming a member, or are looking for more information, please contact Dan O'Brien, Safety & Security Committee Chair, at [safety@themadeleine.edu](mailto:safety@themadeleine.edu) or visit our web page at [www.themadeleine.edu/safety](http://www.themadeleine.edu/safety)

### *The Madeleine Knights of Columbus Council 11682 • Charity-Unity-Fraternity*

## KNIGHTS IN ACTION

#### Activities

- ▶ The Madeleine Council is conducting its annual Wool Sock Drive in conjunction with The Madeleine School. See details on facing page
- ▶ Pancake Breakfast. The Knights will be hosting a pancake breakfast on Sunday, December 11. Pancakes, Zenner breakfast links, eggs, fruit, coffee and juices will be on the menu.

#### Quick Facts

- ▶ There are more than 2 million Knights worldwide in over 16,000 Councils.
- ▶ In the last fraternal year, the Knights have donated nearly \$154 million to worthy causes.

- ▶ Also the Knights have volunteered close to 48 million hours of service to worthwhile causes and charity.
- ▶ The Madeleine Council donated money to Mt. Angel Seminarians this month to assist those seminarians who are in need of travel assistance this holiday season. The holidays are all about family!
- ▶ Men who are eighteen years of age and older and are practicing Catholics may join the Knights. For more information please call Dan Evans @ 503-701-5581 or Dan O'Donnell @ 503-440-9415

*The Council's next meeting will be Tuesday, December 6, at 7:00 pm in the Fireside Room.*

### ADVENT FAITH SHARING

Thank you to those who were able to join for the first Advent Faith Sharing. All are welcome to join us for the remaining sessions:

- ▶ Sundays, Dec. 4, 11 & 18 at 11:15 am in the rectory dining room. (I will let you in, just join me at the back of the church.)
- ▶ Mondays, Dec. 5, 12 & 19 at 6:30 pm, on Zoom. Send your name and email address to [tfenzl@themadeleine.edu](mailto:tfenzl@themadeleine.edu) and I will send the link to you.

### CONFIRMATION NOTES

Gatherings on Sundays, Dec. 4 & 11 at 8:50 am followed by 10:00 am Mass. Bring Bibles and Confirmed in the Spirit.



### BOOK CLUB NEWS

Would you enjoy opportunities to meet with others to share in genial discussion/debate over the contents of some very excellent books? If so...

You are most cordially invited to join our group!

For more information and/or to be added to our email list, please contact our MBC coordinator: Gretchen Stevenson, [gypsy-frau47@yahoo.com](mailto:gypsy-frau47@yahoo.com) or 503-312-6834.



**In today's Gospel, John the Baptist urges us to "Prepare the way of the Lord."** This is what Advent is all about, for we are called to help prepare the way of the Lord by making the real meaning of Christmas come alive in our own hearts, in our family and to reach out to those in need. Is there a family you know who needs assistance? Please call the Society of St. Vincent de Paul so that together we can help the suffering and poor to celebrate Christmas.

—Mary Clare O'Brien, 503-309-7639

# THE MADELEINE GIVING TREE

Tags still remain • Parish Hall driveway • Return gifts by December 12

The tradition of The Madeleine Giving Tree is long and significant. This year, combined between the two worthy organizations below, we started with more than 200 tags on the tree in the Parish Hall driveway.

► **Northwest Family Services Children of Incarcerated Parents**—These children face countless barriers including abuse, neglect, homelessness and food insecurity, as well as having one or both parents incarcerated.

► **Catholic Charities Refugee Services**—Newly arriving refugees often come to the U.S. with nothing; the Refugee Services Program works to provide essential needs. Our Giving Tree will support that with gifts for children and youth.

So come to the Parish Hall, grab a tag or two, and help give a child or family a happier Christmas. Bring the wrapped gift back to The Madeleine by December 12. Drop them off at Masses in the church or at the Parish Office during working hours.



Special thanks to Madeleine School Development Coordinator Dana Harrington and her band of Christmas Elves for braving a rainy Friday to tie 236 tags on our 2022 Giving Tree.

## SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE BEDDING DRIVE

Through Christmas, Sleep in Heavenly Peace is accepting bedding donations at The Madeleine. Please look for the blue bins located in the vestibule.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace has provided 300 beds to children in the Portland area. Many of those beds were built and delivered by Madeleine parishioners and provided with sheets, blankets and pillows from Madeleine bedding drives. Special shout out to the Laskowski family, who



have been at every one of our bunk bed builds and many of our deliveries. We love having you on our team!

Through the generosity of past bedding drives, we have a good supply of sheet sets, but could always use more twin size blankets and comforters, mattress protectors (no extra long please) and pillows. All donations must be new and still in the original packaging.

Thank you to The Madeleine Community for the continued support!

## ANNUAL SOCK DRIVE ENDS THIS WEEKEND

Barrels in the church vestibule through Sunday

Please join us in helping our neighbors in need this winter. The Madeleine Knights of Columbus and The Madeleine School are sponsoring the annual Sock Drive.

Blue barrels are in the church vestibule and will remain until Sunday. NOTE: Please look for socks with a wool blend and no cotton.

Socks will be donated to those in need through Transition Projects and Saint

André Bessette.

Don't have time to go sock shopping? Or would you prefer we take your cash and purchase wool socks in bulk? Just scan the QR code at right, or drop off a donation at the Parish Office.



## MILESTONES

### Baptism

Congratulations and welcome to **Zoe and Sawyer Kleffner** children of Andrew and Keri Kleffner, who joined the Church through the sacrament of baptism this weekend!

## PARISH OFFERTORY UPDATE

### November 2022 Collection

Budgeted Offertory, full month . . . . . \$66,000  
Collected Offertory, full month . . . . . \$68,158

### Fiscal Year 2022-23 Collection

Budgeted Offertory, year to date . . . . . \$332,000  
Collected Offertory, year to date . . . . . \$349,450  
Offertory Surplus (deficit) . . . . . \$17,450

## WEEKLY MASS TIMES

### Masses:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday . . . . . 8:00 am  
Thursday . . . . . No School: 8:00 am  
During School: 2:00 pm  
Saturday Vigil . . . . . 5:00 pm  
Sunday . . . . . 8:00 am, 10:00 am

► Livestream 10:00 am Sunday  
at [youtube.com/themadeleineparish](http://youtube.com/themadeleineparish)

**Penance** . . . By appointment; call Parish Office

## PARISH OFFICE

**Hours** . . . . . Monday–Friday, 10:00 am–3:00 pm

**Phone:** 503-281-5777 . . . . . **Fax:** 503-281-0673

**School Office** . . . . . 503-288-9197

## PARISH STAFF

**Rev. Mike Biewend**—Pastor  
[fathermike@themadeleine.edu](mailto:fathermike@themadeleine.edu) . . . . . ext. 111

**Deacon Mike O'Mahoney**—Permanent Deacon  
[deaconmike@themadeleine.edu](mailto:deaconmike@themadeleine.edu)

**Carol Glasgow**—School Principal  
[cglasgow@themadeleine.edu](mailto:cglasgow@themadeleine.edu) . . . . . 503-288-9197

**John Garrow**—Business Manager  
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**Terry Silva**—Facilities Support  
[tsilva@themadeleine.edu](mailto:tsilva@themadeleine.edu) . . . . . ext. 117

**Rich Hammons**—Director of Communications  
[rhammons@themadeleine.edu](mailto:rhammons@themadeleine.edu) . . . . . ext. 129

## SACRAMENTS

**Marriages, Funerals, Anointing of the Sick**—Fr. Mike . . . . . ext. 111

**Infant Baptism**—Darlene Maurer . . . . . ext. 125

**First Reconciliation, First Eucharist**—Rose Horton . . . . . [sac-prep@themadeleine.edu](mailto:sac-prep@themadeleine.edu)

**RCIA**—Christi Bohmbach, [rcia@themadeleine.edu](mailto:rcia@themadeleine.edu)

**Confirmation**—Fr. Mike . . . . . ext. 111

## COUNCILS & CONTACTS

**Pastoral Council**—Meg Scharle

**Finance Council**—Jim Jones . . . . . 503-284-3301

**Buildings & Grounds**—Erin Couch . . . . . 503-281-9575

**School Advisory**—Tim Resch . . . . . 503-984-46072

**Facility Requests**—[themadeleine.edu/facilities](http://themadeleine.edu/facilities)

**Maintenance Requests**—John Garrow  
[jgarrow@themadeleine.edu](mailto:jgarrow@themadeleine.edu) . . . . . ext. 118

**St Vincent de Paul** (Food, utility, rent assistance)  
Mary Clare O'Brien . . . . . 503-309-7639

**Bulletin submissions due 5:00 pm Tuesday**  
Email to [bulletin@themadeleine.edu](mailto:bulletin@themadeleine.edu)

# A Northwest Christmas II

Classical, Blues, & Jazz Christmas Classics!

December 11 @ 3 PM  
The Madeleine Church | Portland OR

- Bravo! Northwest Choir
- Norman Sylvester Blues Band
- Michael Kissinger Jazz Quartet
- Northwest Chamber Orchestra
- The Ne Plus Ultra Jazz Orchestra
- Pianist & Conductor Maria Manzo



Tickets  
[www.bravoconcerts.com](http://www.bravoconcerts.com)  
360-906-0441



## THE OREGON BARTENDERS GUILD: REPEAL DAY PDX

December 5 • The Old Madeleine Church  
[www.oregonbarguild.com/repealdaypdx](http://www.oregonbarguild.com/repealdaypdx)

Join some of Portland's top bartenders in celebrating the anniversary of the passage of the 21st Amendment and the repeal of Prohibition.



The inaugural 2022 event will feature a speakeasy style party at the historic Old Madeleine Church with up to 10 bars featuring unique cocktails, craft beer, wine and zero ABV cocktails. Cocktails will be crafted by some of the Rose City's best bartenders, a photo booth will be available to capture your memories of the night, local food features and live entertainment.

All proceeds go towards the non-profit volunteer run and community based Oregon Bartenders Guild, whose goal is to empower bartenders and related industries through education, community service and fellowship.

Guests are encouraged to dress in prohibition-era attire such as flapper-style dresses with fur shawls and Al Capone-inspired suits.

### Tickets:

- ▶ **\$30 General Admission**— 7:00 pm-10:00 pm. Includes entry to the event, 3 drink tickets and food.
- ▶ **\$50 VIP Ticket**—6:00 pm-10:00 pm. Include entry to the event, 5 drink tickets, a special experience, private access, and gifts from partners/sponsors.

**Attendees must be 21 years of age or older.**

45th Parallel Universe presents

## Cello Nutcracker

Virtuosity comes to Irvington!  
Join us for this holiday classic  
at the newly renovated Old Madeleine Church!

Thank you to our sponsors



The North Pole Cello Sextet | December 14 | 7:00 pm | The Madeleine

For tickets and information  
[45thparallelpdx.org](http://45thparallelpdx.org)



# RMD for 2022?

If you are at least 70½ years of age and are required to take a minimum distribution from your IRA, you can donate part or all of that distribution to The Madeleine, tax free! For information, contact parish Business Manager, John Garrow, 503-281-5777 or [jgarrow@themadeleine.edu](mailto:jgarrow@themadeleine.edu)

“How often we send instant messages to the people we love! Let's do this with the Lord too through short prayers of aspiration so that our hearts remain connected to Him. And let's not forget to read His responses in the Gospel to receive a Word of life.”

—Pope Francis via Twitter  
@pontifex



## Upcoming concerts & events at The Madeleine

Performances in The Old Madeleine Church unless noted

- ▶ **Dec. 5, 7:00 pm** • Oregon Bartenders Guild Repeal Day • [oregonbarguild.com/repealdaypdx](http://oregonbarguild.com/repealdaypdx)
- ▶ **Dec. 11, 3:00 pm** • Main Church • Bravo! Northwest Chorale, Orchestra, guest jazz artists • A Northwest Christmas II • [bravoconcerts.com](http://bravoconcerts.com)
- ▶ **Dec. 14, 7:00 pm** • 45th Parallel Universe with six brilliant cellists • Cello Nutcracker • [www.45thparallelpdx.org](http://www.45thparallelpdx.org)

# THE MADELEINE MARKETPLACE

*Holiday Bazaar & Christmas Tree Lighting*

DECEMBER 8 2:00–8:00 PM



JOIN US THURSDAY! FUN, FOOD, MUSIC, SHOPPING,  
TREE LIGHTING, SANTA AND MUCH MORE!

Join us Thursday Night for our annual holiday tradition, The Madeleine Marketplace and Tree Lighting Thursday, December 8, from 2-8 pm.

Plan to stay for a fun-filled afternoon and evening. Get your shopping started more than 60 vendors in the Parish Hall and Fireside Room.

## WE'VE GOT DINNER COVERED

Cook's night off! We will have pizza, chili, churros, spring rolls, soft drinks, bake sale goodies and much more. Entertainment? Christmas caroling, photos with Santa and Mrs. Santa, cookie decorating and more. And the Tree Lighting at 6:00 pm

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Help make this night go off without a hitch by signing up for one of our volunteer slots. Sign up online at [www.themadeleine.edu/marketplace](http://www.themadeleine.edu/marketplace)

Questions? Contact Julie Kupers (720) 936-5635 or [jkupers@themadeleine.edu](mailto:jkupers@themadeleine.edu)

***Bake Sale goodies needed***—We need your baked goods for our bake sale! Bake your best cookies, pies, cakes, candies, then bring them to the Parish Hall on Thursday, December 8 by 10:00 am.

## IS YOUR MARRIAGE HURTING? RETROUVAILLE CAN HELP!

Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi with a long i) is a program for married couples facing difficult challenges in their relationship, such as pornography, infidelity, isolation, addiction, and loneliness. It is a program to help couples improve their communication.

Oregon Retrouvaille will hold a weekend program for couples struggling in their marriages on January 20-22, 2023 at Our Lady of Peace Retreat Center in Beaverton. Visit [helpourmarriage.org](http://helpourmarriage.org), email [portland@retrovaille.com](mailto:portland@retrovaille.com) or call 503-225-9191 for more information.



## Mmm...Pancakes!

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS PANCAKE BREAKFAST  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 AFTER 10:00 MASS

Join us in the Parish Hall for a great pancake breakfast!  
Lots of yummy food...at a very affordable price.

Adults \$5 ♦ Families \$15 ♦ Kids 12 & under \$3

Sign up online at [www.themadeleine.edu/pancakes](http://www.themadeleine.edu/pancakes)



# Immaculate CONCEPTION

The Immaculate Conception is the doctrine that Mary, conceived in the normal way through an act of love by her mother and father (St. Joachim and St. Anne), was born free of original sin and its effects from the first moment of her existence. This special favor was conferred on her because of her role in God's plan for our salvation. Historically, this doctrine has sometimes been

misunderstood as the conception of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit in the feast we know as the Annun-  
ciation. Instead, the Immaculate Conception celebrates the special gift of God's grace to Mary because she was to be

the mother of Jesus, God's chosen agent to bring about

our salvation. We hail Mary in faith and prayer because she is "full of grace" and because

"the Lord is with her." In other words,

Mary was filled with God's life well

before the Messiah was conceived

in her womb.

After consulting with the bishops of the Church, Pope Pius IX first solemnly defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 in the Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

The Immaculate Conception has the distinction of being one of only two formal Church dogmas to be solemnly defined by the full teaching authority of popes rather than general Councils (the other being Mary's Assumption). This means that the Immaculate Conception has been solemnly defined as an infallible teaching to be believed by the whole Church. We not only believe that this is our truth, but we also try to imitate the meaning of this truth. While we honor Mary for the privilege of being without sin, we also try to be like her in becoming faithful bearers of Christ in the world. As we strive for greater integrity in our words and actions we allow God to work in us to help transform our world into one of greater justice and love. Thus we imitate Mary and become the kind of disciples that Jesus praises in the Gospel: "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it (Luke 11:28).



## *The Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55)

And Mary said:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel  
for he remembered his promise of mercy,  
the promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children forever.

## *Mary, Mother of the Church*

Jesus gave Mary to the Church from the cross when he told his beloved disciple, “Behold your mother” (John 19:26-27). Mary was present in the upper room with the other disciples on Pentecost, when the Church was born (Acts 1:13-14). Over the centuries of Christianity, Mary has been sought out by the faithful who find in her support for their own lives of discipleship. As one whose own life of faith was not easy or simple, Mary is a companion who can show us a path in our everyday lives and in our suffering.

Mary is a wonderful example of what happens when one opens oneself to the life and power of God. As at the marriage at Cana, Mary always directs our attention to Jesus, saying “Do whatever he tells you.” (John 2:5). Mary is not a goddess wielding power. Neither is she controlling and domineering nor cold and aloof. Mary is there for us whenever we need her.

## WHY DEFINE THIS DOCTRINE?

The doctrine of Mary’s Immaculate Conception affirms that through God’s grace she was never separated from God by sin. Over the centuries Mary’s freedom from original sin—the teaching that every human is born in the wrong relationship with God (this is what sin is and does) and so must be freed from this condition through God’s grace (this is what salvation is and does)—was disputed by theologians who could not agree.

After consulting with the Bishops of the Church to confirm that almost all Catholics believed this doctrine, Pope Pius IX first solemnly proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 in these words: We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which asserts that the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, was preserved free from every stain of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and, for this reason, must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful.

## WHY DECEMBER 8?

December 8 is the liturgical celebration of Mary’s Immaculate Conception, i.e., her being “adorned from the first moment of her conception with the splendors of an entirely unique holiness” (Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, #56). This date was chosen because it is 9 months (the time of a child’s gestation in the mother’s womb) before the traditional celebration of the feast of the Nativity of Mary on September 8.

### *A Prayer for the Immaculate Conception*

We thank you, O Mother, because in showing yourself to us  
You free us of all stain of sin;  
You remind us that what comes first is the grace of God,  
The love of Jesus Christ who gave his life for us,  
The strength of the Holy Spirit which renews all things.  
Let us not give in to discouragement,  
But, trusting in your constant help,  
Let us engage ourselves fully in renewal of self,  
Of this city and of the entire world.  
Pray for us, Holy Mother of God!

—Pope Francis


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