

Immaculate Conception

"I am the Immaculate Conception." At the request of St. Bernadette, the Lady in 1858 finally gave an answer to Bernadette's repeated question as to what her name was. Our Lady had also announced her Immaculate Conception to Sister St. Catherine Labouré during the apparitions at the Rue du Bac back in 1830. These statements from the Blessed Virgin Mary, confirms the infallible Doctrines of Pope Pius IX, who had spoken "ex cathedra" four years earlier. (*Ex cathedra* is Latin for "from the chair." Roman Catholics believe that the pope speaks infallibly when speaking *ex cathedra* on questions of faith or morals). He had declared that the Virgin Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin in her mother's womb. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: *"The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin"*. The Immaculate Conception is perhaps one of the most misunderstood dogmas of the Catholic Church. The Immaculate Conception does not refer to the conception of Jesus; rather, it refers to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother, St. Anne. But the Immaculate Conception is NOT a title. Mary has not merely claimed that she "has been immaculately conceived," but that she **IS** the "Immaculate Conception." In a similar way, there is another title for Mary: Mother of God. But again we do not merely say that Mary "mothered God," but rather that her very identity is "Mother of God." The point here is that these are not simply events in her life, but it is part of her very identity. It is who she is; physically. The feast day of the Immaculate Conception is December 8th. Sherrie Clutts DRE