

ST. MARTHA’S CHURCH †† P.O. Box 55 †† ASHLAND CITY, TN 37015 †† 615-792-4255

Rev. Benjamin Butler, Pastor

Mass		Confessions		Adoration
Tues – Fri	6:30 pm	Tues – Fri	5:30 pm – 6:15 pm	Tues-Fri 5:30 – 6:30 pm
Saturday	8:00 am	Saturday	8:30 am – 9:30 am	Sat. 8:30 – 9:30 am
	5:30 pm (English)		4:15 pm – 5:15 pm	
Sunday	9:30 am (English)	Sunday	8:15 am – 9:15 am	
	11:30 am (Vietnamese)			

MASS INTENTIONS Dec 5th - Dec 12th

SAT.	5:30 pm	Tammy Skipper
SUN.	9:30 am	For the People of St. Martha’s
SUN.	11:30 am	Vietnamese Mass
TUE.	6:30 pm	Judi & Peyton Parker & Family
WED.	6:30 pm	For the proclamation of Mary as Co-redemptrix
THUR.	6:30 pm	Alex Mariano
FRI.	6:30 pm	Patty Hutton +
SAT.	8:00 am	Judi Parker

Assignments for next weekend Dec 12th – Dec 13th

	Sat	Sun
Lector:	Cheryl Figlio	Valerie Cummings

If you are listed to serve & cannot attend please call someone else on the list to serve in your place.

Last week’s Collection	\$ 1,765
Expenses	\$ 2,000
Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$ 235)

Go to Confession before the Christmas season.

Understanding Mary in Scripture. Beginning on Sunday Dec. 13 and continuing the next 7 Sundays after the 9:30 am Sunday Mass there will be lessons taught by Dr. Brant Pitre on the Blessed Virgin Mary in the classroom below the rectory. These talks are also found on Formed.org.

Dec. 19th 10 am – 2 pm. Free community clothing give-away. Men, women and children’s clothing in the pavilion. Coffee and cookies also while you browse the clothes.

Food baskets: The Ladies of Charity are giving parishes Christmas food baskets again this year. Please contact Martha West at 615-792-4351 or Patsy Slayden at 615-792-5950 if you or someone you know could use a food basket. We have 25 available.

Online Advent Mission: Each Sunday in Advent, from 7-8 p.m., Dr. Ralph Martin will teach and answer questions on the stages of the spiritual journey, as found in his book *The Fulfillment of All Desire*. You need not have read the book beforehand. To participate, register for free at www.renewalministries.net/advent.

Advent tradition: Rorate Mass (Votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary) on Saturday Dec. 19th at 6:30 am. Breakfast at Cody’s Diner immediately afterwards.

Please pray for the homebound in our parish Alexis Miklich, Judy and Jean Hopwood.

The parish website is www.stmarthacatholicchurch.org Bulletins are available on website. Please check for other announcements as well.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Hail Mary



December 8th is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. The *raison d'être* of the Immaculate Conception: To become the mother of the Savior, Mary “was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role.” The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as “full of grace.” In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free ascent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God’s grace (CCC 490).

On December 8, 1854, Pius IX defined the Dogma in the papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus*: “The 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, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.”

Of particular import is that all that happens to Mary is “in view of the merits of Jesus Christ.” Mary thus is indeed part of the Church, and needed salvation, though through a “singular grace” was kept “free from all stain of original sin.”

It is fitting, perhaps it is even necessary (though this particular language is not typically used), that Mary be the purest vessel for Christ, as the ark had to be perfect and kept pure, etc.



What is not meant by conception?

- It does not mean that active conception of her body in the womb of her mother. The generative act of her parents is not in view here.
- The conception refers especially to the moment of animation, that is, the moment when her soul was created by God and infused into the bodily matter from her parents.
- There is a sense in which Mary will contract at least some of the effects of sin through her natural inheritance of fallen humanity. This is why we do not have to posit Prelapsarian preternatural gifts in her (they were not in the humanity of Jesus either).

Mary is preserved from any stain of Original Sin:

- Original sin is essentially the lack of sanctifying grace in the soul due to the fall of our first parents.
- Mary was preserved from this lack of sanctifying grace, so there never was a time when her soul was not in a state of grace.
- Mary was therefore in a state resembling the state of original justice and integrity – *she was free from actual sin and the concupiscence that is a result of original sin* (cf. S.Th III on this matter – the *fomes peccati*).
- Mary was *not* exempt, however, from the temporal punishments that are a result of original sin (sorrow, pain and death – of course, there is a question whether she actually experienced death).

God does this out of His own inscrutable will:

- Blessed Duns Scotus: It was fitting that Mary should be conceived free from all sin, God was able to do it, and therefore He did it (*dequit, potuit, ergo fecit*).

Mary was Redeemed:

- “In view of the merits of Christ”
- A redemptio praeservativa, not a redemptio reparativa
- By a singular grace of God

Scriptural Support:

- Luke 1:28, “Hail, full of grace!”: Gk., *chaire kecharitomene* – the case indicates something happening in the past which continues in effect, and the vocative aspect may indicate re-naming where Mary is renamed “full of grace”.
- Luke 1:41, “Blessed are you among women”.

Mary as the Second Eve:

- The comparison/contrast is a Patristic mainstay.
- The parallel works best with the teaching of the Immaculate Conception, i.e., Mary, like Eve, enjoys a state similar to Original Justice.

A Thomistic Principle (S.Th III.27.5): “The nearer one approaches to a principle the more one participates in its effects . . . The Blessed Virgin Mary, being nearer to Christ than any other human being, since it is from her that He received His humanity, receives from Him therefore a fullness of grace surpassing that of all other creatures.”

Mary as the Archetype of the Church:

- Mary is conceived without Original Sin. She anticipates the Church in that all members of the Church have Original Sin taken away at baptism.
- Otto Semmelroth – “The Church, whose essence is to be free from Original Sin, could be personified only be a figure, who from the very moment of her existence, was conceived without Original Sin” (*Archetype*, 147).

— Fr. Butler