

Society of the Sacred Heart



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Longanimity: The Virtue of Waiting with Courage

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In our world of fast food and high-speed electronics, we people of the 21st century do not like to wait. How impatient we easily become, if we have to wait a couple of minutes at a traffic light, or if our computer is a few seconds too slow. Despite all of the time saving advantages which technology has made possible, people today are more in a hurry than ever before, especially as we near the holiday rush before Christmas. No one wants to wait.

God's Wisdom of Waiting

However, the liturgical season of Advent is all about waiting. These four weeks of Advent symbolize thousands of years of waiting for the most important event in history, the birth of the Son of God. After the Original Sin of our first parents in the Garden, God promised a Redeemer to save humanity from sin. However, in order for humanity to understand the consequences of sin and thus to appreciate the extraordinary gift of Redemption, God waited thousands of years before sending His only Son as our Redeemer. This careful preparation

shows us that God wisely knows how to wait.

God has the right time for everything. Good things come to those who patiently wait.

Waiting is Not Wasted

When we think of waiting, in today's world, we may perhaps think of a crowded doctor's office, or of a long line at the supermarket, or of rush hour traffic. Waiting may seem like wasted time--idle moments of waiting which we simply have to kill somehow.

However, for the Christian, no time is ever to be wasted because even in trying times of trial and hardship, the Christian is awaiting a reality which is beyond this present world.

Faith gives us patience to await the supernatural. To await something means to look forward with expectation, as we say in the Creed: *I await the resurrection of the dead, I look forward to the life of the world to come.* As we wait with patient virtue during these moments of our earthly existence, we can ultimately deserve to receive a reward in Heaven, our true and lasting home.

Longanimity: Virtue of patient waiting

Waiting itself is not a virtue, but it is the essential part of the virtue which Christian tradition calls longanimity. We find this virtue listed by St. Paul as one of the 12 Fruits of the Holy Ghost. (Gal 5:22-23)

St. Thomas explains in detail that longanimity is the fruit of patience which holds strong over time. Sometimes called long-suffering, longanimity refers to patience insofar as waiting causes difficulty, suffering, and sorrow. Longanimity is pro-longed patience. It is prolonged endurance of arduous difficulties over a protracted period of time for the sake of the good. (Summa Theologica IIa IIae q. 136, art. 5)

St. Francis de Sales had special esteem for this virtue of knowing how to wait with courage amid the most trying circumstances: “I have greater esteem for a person who knows how to bear suffering patiently than for one who receives magnificent projects.”



Benefits of longanimity

In times of trial we must learn to await God’s good time. In the language of the Bible, to wait upon God means to persevere in prayer, to invoke God’s help without ceasing. If God keeps us waiting, as He did for the prophets of old, certainly there must be a lesson to learn. Perhaps He wants us to understand that we truly do need Him because on our own, we can do nothing.

Sometimes God waits to help us until we are in our hour of greatest need, so that we can come closer to Him through prayer, so that we will better appreciate what we ask for, or so that we can make up for our past faults. The longer God keeps us waiting, the more His divine help will surpass all our expectations. We must be confident that He will answer our prayers when He thinks the time is right.



Wait for God because God waits for us

The next time you find yourself impatient in those everyday moments when you have to wait, think about how often God waits for us. Jesus waits for us in the tabernacle. He awaits us in the confessional. Jesus awaits us in that unpopular person among us whom everyone neglects to speak with. Jesus is waiting us in those unpleasant chores of daily life. In the work place, in our offices, workshops, and kitchens, Jesus is waiting for us. He is inviting us to love Him by fidelity to daily duty, By acts of charity accomplished for our neighbor.

Sometimes we may wonder why God keeps us waiting...For an answer to our prayer, or for giving us the help we need... But it is rather we ourselves who have so often left Jesus to wait for us and our own convenience.

Advent Resolution: Cultivate Longanimity by Fervent Morning Prayer

This Advent, let us not leave Jesus to wait any longer. Let us have recourse to prayer,

especially during the morning hours of each day before we begin our daily routine. Advent is the morning time of the Church's liturgical year. If we are faithful to some minutes of prayer in the morning, if we take a few extra morning moments in the presence of God at the start of our day, we will then most assuredly be more patient throughout the rest of the day.

This Advent, await the Lord's coming with patience. Persevere in prayer. Spend your morning moments in the presence of the Lord who waits for your love. Then, you will see that good things come to those who wait. The coming of Christ at Christmas will be a small foretaste of the blessed eternity which awaits us all in Heaven.

Other meditations on the virtues of Christ our Infant King can be found at

www.infantkingoffering.org

The members of the Society of the Sacred Heart are consecrated to our Lady under the title of the Immaculate Conception, along with the whole Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest. Therefore it behooves all of us to celebrate the proper feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8 with joy, gratitude and magnificence. For this purpose, a thorough preparation is necessary. Let us therefore study and pray, meditate and memorize, the beautiful novena prayer attributed to the Pope, St. Pius X:

Novena Prayer in honor of the Immaculate Conception

May be said November 30 to December 8

O Most Holy Virgin who wast pleasing to God and didst become His Mother. Immaculate in your body, in your soul, in your faith and in your love, we beseech thee to look graciously upon the wretched who implore thy powerful protection. The wicked serpent, against whom the primal curse was hurled, continues nonetheless to wage war and to lay snares for the unhappy children of Eve. Ah, do thou, our blessed Mother, our Queen and Advocate, who from the first instant of thy conception didst crush the head of our enemy, receive the prayers that we unite single-heartedly to thine and conjure thee to offer at the throne of God, that we may never fall into the snares that are laid for us, in such wise that we may all come to the haven of salvation; and in the midst of so many dangers may holy Church and the fellowship of Christians everywhere sing once more the hymn of deliverance, victory and peace. Amen.

Christmas Prayer

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, O my God! to hear my prayer and grant my desires, through the merits of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother. Amen

It is piously believed that whoever recites the above prayer fifteen times a day from the feast of St. Andrew (30th November) until Christmas will obtain what is asked.



COMMENTARY ON THE NOVENA
IN HONOR OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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“**MOST HOLY VIRGIN**” the Pope refers to the Virgin announced for the first time by the prophet Isaias in 742 b.c. At that time the little kingdom of Juda was threatened by a northern alliance of Syria and Ephraim. The prophet Isaias assures King Achaz of Juda that Jerusalem shall stand if they have faith in the Lord: “*And the Lord spoke again to Achaz, saying: ‘Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God either unto the depth of hell, or unto the height above.’ And Achaz said: ‘I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord’.*” He did not say that out of piety but rather because he was afraid of being forced to relinquish his evil ways, having been confronted about his idolatry. “*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel.*”(Is 7:10-14)

The Evangelists will see the fulfillment of this old prophecy at the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-31) and at the birth of our Lord, (Matt 1:23), with the Virgin keeping the honor of the virginity she had before, during and after the childbirth. This has been a dogma of the Faith since the fourth century, expressed by the term “Mary ever virgin.”

Our most holy Virgin “**WAS PLEASING TO THE LORD**” not so much because of her physical integrity or spiritual attributes but essentially because of her humility. This truth has been revealed to us by the Holy Ghost from the very mouth of our Lady when she exclaims: “*Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae*” / “*because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid.*” (Magnificat, Luke 1:48). Therefore our humble virgin, chosen and prepared by God from all eternity “**BECAME HIS MOTHER**” in time and place. Herein lies the mystery of Mary, her “raison d’etre”; all other privileges and mysteries of her life are ordained to her divine motherhood and to the mission of her Son as we are going to see.

Let us come back on what involves her Immaculate Virginity: “**IMMACULATE VIRGIN IN THY BODY, IN THY SOUL, IN THY FAITH AND IN THY LOVE,**” “From a New Testament point of view virginity involves the total self-giving of the person - body and soul, mind and heart - to Jesus Christ... It implies a prior calling and election which consecrates the person to the service of God.” (Bastero). In contrast to the Immaculate Virgin being pleasing to the Lord, we acknowledge our misery, and we cry “**HAVE PITY ON US**”, Mater Misericordiae/ Mother of Mercy (Salve Regina/Hail Holy Queen), “**AND LOOK WITH KINDNESS ON US SO MISERABLE**”, gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle/ mourning and weeping in this valley of tears, “**WHO IMPLORE THY POWERFUL PROTECTION**”, sub tuum praesidium confugimus/beneath thy protection.

The Holy Father brings us back to the cause of all evils, the cause of our misery: the original sin. **“ALAS! THE INFERNAL SERPENT AGAINST WHOM WAS CAST THE FIRST DAMNATION.”** The disobedience of Adam and Eve caused a threefold curse: on the serpent, on the woman and on Adam. (Gen 3:14-19)

“And the Lord God said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and the beasts of the earth: upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.”

We find then in the first book of the Holy Scripture (Genesis) the first damnation and in the last book (The Apocalypse), the continuation of the enmities. *“And the dragon was angry against the woman: and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*(Rev 12:17). Hence the Pope writes, **“Alas! The infernal serpent “CONTINUES TO COMBAT AND TO TEMPT THE POOR SONS OF EVE.”**

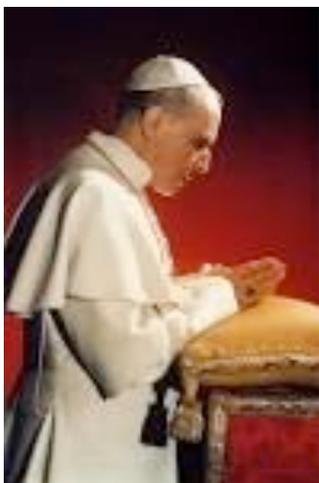
In the midst of so many dangers that are threatening us until the end of time, i.e. until the number of elect is fulfilled in Heaven, we turn to our new mother, no more the unhappy Eve who failed, but to our new Eve, our Blessed Mother:

“O THOU, OUR BLESSED MOTHER.” St. Pius X in the encyclical *“Ad Diem Illum”* (1904) explains how Mary is our Mother. *“For is not Mary the Mother of Christ? Then she is our mother also.”* Since Christ is the Saviour of the human family by incorporating us to Him as in one body, He being the head and we being the members, Mary is the mother of the whole Christ. *“Wherefore in the same holy bosom of His most chaste Mother, Christ took to Himself flesh, and united to Himself the spiritual (mystical) body formed by those who were to believe in Him.”* And she who brought forth Christ the Head without pain was to beget us members in the sorrows of the Passion and Crucifixion of her Son.

We are born of Mary like members of the body united to its head. The appeal to Mary’s motherhood is an appeal to her motherly heart that, no one can doubt, will work with all diligence to succor us. All the more certain that we call on her by other titles: **“OUR QUEEN AND OUR ADVOCATE.”** Pope Pius XII is referred to as the Pope of the Queenship of Mary (encyclical *Ad Caeli Reginam*, 1954); however this title emerged in the Patristic period based on the fact that the Virgin Mother of the Emmanuel ought to share in her Son’s royal dignity. Will she not be, according to the Archangel St. Gabriel, the Mother of a king who will sit on the throne of David forever? *“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of his kingdom there shall be no end.”* (Luke 1:32-33) She is assuming, therefore, the title of Queen Mother whose prerogative is supreme authority and power.

Our queen is also **“OUR ADVOCATE”**. (*Advocata nostra* cf. *Salve Regina*.) St. Irenaeus of Lyon (3rd century) already described her as an advocate. Why do we need an advocate? We are all sinners, and one day we will be judged for our actions. Just as in a court of law, it would be foolish to try and defend ourselves, we need someone who understands ultimately the ways of God’s justice. That someone is Mary, pleading for us and for all humanity. How good is Divine Providence and the divine plan of redemption--by our baptism, we become the children of Mary who is the Mother of the Judge who died for us. Who would not be saved unless chooses not to be? Our advocate, Mary, pleads for us, defends us before the judge, while the accuser is His and her personal enemy, whose head was crushed by her when she was conceived. That is why having invoked Mary under the titles of **“MOTHER, QUEEN AND ADVOCATE”**, comforted by this first and eternal victory, we invoke she who is the Immaculate Conception: **“THOU WHO CRUSHEST THE HEAD OF THE ENEMY FROM THE FIRST MOMENT OF THY CONCEPTION.”** Let us meditate again on the appropriateness of this dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. As Dionysius of Chartres puts it, “We shrink from saying of this woman who was to crush the head of the serpent (*Gen 3:15*) that had been crushed by him and that Mother of God that she had ever been a daughter of the evil one.” And St. Pius X goes on saying, “If God has such a horror of sin as to have willed to keep free from sin the future Mother of His Son, who can doubt that it is our duty by a special homage to gain the heart of Mary” (*Ad Diem Illum*) and to pray, **“ACCEPT OUR PRAYERS AND UNITED AS IN ONE HEART, WE BESEECH THEE, PRESENT THEM BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD (*Rev 4:2-10*) IN ORDER THAT WE NEVER ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE TAKEN BY THE TRAPS LAID BEFORE US (*Rev 12:17*). BUT THAT WE ALL REACH THE POINT OF SALVATION; AND THAT IN THE MIDST OF SO MANY DANGERS, THE CHURCH AND CATHOLIC SOCIETY SING ONCE AGAIN THE HYMN OF DELIVERANCE, OF VICTORY AND OF PEACE.”**

As a conclusion, let us remember that happy day on May 13, 1846 when 22 bishops in the United States of America “with enthusiastic acclaim and with unanimous approval chose the Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, as the Patroness of the country”. O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!





THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Ineffabilis Deus

Apostolic Constitution issued by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854.

God Ineffable -- whose ways are mercy and truth, whose will is omnipotence itself, and whose wisdom "reaches from end to end mightily, and orders all things sweetly" -- having foreseen from all eternity the lamentable wretchedness of the entire human race which would result from the sin of Adam, decreed, by a plan hidden from the centuries, to complete the first work of his goodness by a mystery yet more wondrously sublime through the Incarnation of the Word. This he decreed in order that man who, contrary to the plan of Divine Mercy had been led into sin by the cunning malice of Satan, should not perish; and in order that what had been lost in the first Adam would be gloriously restored in the Second Adam. From the very beginning, and before time began, the eternal Father chose and prepared for his only-begotten Son a Mother in whom the Son of God would become incarnate and from whom, in the blessed fullness of time, he would be born into this world. Above all creatures did God so loved her that truly in her was the Father well pleased with singular delight. Therefore, far above all the angels and all the saints so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of his divinity that this mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater, and which, outside of God, no mind can succeed in comprehending fully.

Supreme Reason for the Privilege: The Divine Maternity

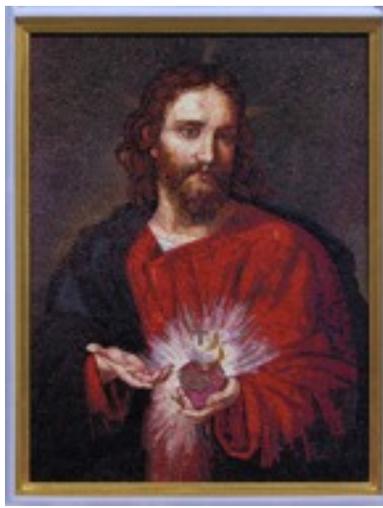
And indeed it was wholly fitting that so wonderful a mother should be ever resplendent with the glory of most sublime holiness and so completely free from all taint of original sin that she would triumph utterly over the ancient serpent. To her did the Father will to give his only-begotten Son -- the Son whom, equal to the Father and begotten by him, the Father loves from his heart -- and to give this Son in such a way that he would be the one and the same common Son of God the Father and of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was she whom the Son himself chose to make his Mother and it was from her that the Holy Spirit willed and brought it about that he should be conceived and born from whom he himself proceeds.^[1]

Papal Sanctions

All these things our illustrious predecessor, Alexander VII, summed up in these words: "We have in mind the fact that the Holy Roman Church solemnly celebrated the Feast of the Conception of the undefiled and ever-Virgin Mary, and has long ago appointed for this a special and proper Office according to the pious, devout, and laudable instruction which was given by our predecessor, Sixtus IV. Likewise, we were desirous, after the example of our predecessors, to favor this praiseworthy piety, devotion, feast and veneration -- a veneration which is in keeping with the piety unchanged in the Roman Church from the day it was instituted. We also desired to protect this piety and devotion of venerating and extolling the most Blessed Virgin preserved from original sin by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, we were anxious to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in the flock of Christ by putting down arguments and controversies and by removing scandals. So at the instance and request of the bishops mentioned above, with the chapters of the churches, and of King Philip and his kingdoms, we renew the Constitutions and Decrees issued by the Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, especially Sixtus IV,^[8] Paul V,^[9] and Gregory XV,^[10] in favor of the doctrine asserting that the soul of the Blessed Virgin, in its creation and infusion into the body, was endowed with the grace of the Holy Spirit and preserved from original sin; and also in favor of the feast and veneration of the conception of the Virgin Mother of God, which, as is manifest, was instituted in keeping with that pious belief. So we command this feast to be observed under the censures and penalties contained in the same Constitutions.



These are excerpts taken from the Apostolic Constitution of Pius IX by which he declared the Immaculate Conception a doctrine of the Catholic Church. Three and a half years later, on March 25, 1858, at the Grotto of Massabielle, near Lourdes, France, a peasant girl named Bernadette Soubirous, asked a vision of a beautiful woman her name. She replied, "I am the Immaculate Conception." Bernadette hurried to tell the parish priest the Lady's name, and it was, in part, because of this, that the apparition was approved. Since Bernadette was an uneducated girl, and would have had no knowledge of the title "The Immaculate Conception", or of the Apostolic Constitution, it was reasoned that woman in the vision would have had to have been the Blessed Mother--Our Lady of Lourdes.



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Mark your calendars: Annual Retreat Dates have been scheduled for the weekend of May 29-31 at Mundelein Seminary, Libertyville, Illinois.

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