

Ideas for Your School Community's Celebration of
The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Patronal Feastday of the United States of America
Holy Day of Obligation - December 8

FROM THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

"O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin prepared a worthy dwelling place for your Son..."

- One grade level might take responsibility for coming up with creative ways to help faculty, staff, parishioners and other students reflect on whether or not their hearts and souls are "worthy dwelling places" for Jesus.
- Mary was born free from all stain of original sin in order to be a worthy dwelling place for Jesus. But we should also remember that, like all of us, she lived in this world surrounded by sin and yet she remained free from sin. Mary was open to the grace of God and chose to live a holy life. One or more of the older grade levels might discuss these concepts and take responsibility for acting out a morality play for the rest of the school; demonstrating ways that they might be tempted to give in to the sins of this world but instead be like Mary and choose to live a holy life and thus be a worthy dwelling place for Jesus.
- God prepared a worthy dwelling place for His Son. So many people in our world today go without proper shelter. Perhaps one or more grade levels might take responsibility for some activity that would help the homeless.

FROM THE PREFACE OF THE DAY

"...You placed her above all others to be for your people an advocate of grace and a model of holiness."

- One or more grade levels might be asked to write reflections on how Mary is a model of holiness for them. The essays could be on display for others to read or could be read aloud as part of an assembly.
- One grade level could be responsible for converting a classroom into a prayer room where others could visit and bring to Mary their worries, anxieties, fears, and hopes. People could be invited to carry a paper containing all these thoughts to the prayer room, and in the beauty and quiet of this room they could sit and share those thoughts with the Blessed Mother and then step forward to place the paper into a basket as they say "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." This prayer could be woven throughout the day.

FROM THE APPARITIONS OF THE VIRGIN MARY TO BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS IN LOURDES 1858

"I am the Immaculate Conception." "I do not promise you happiness in this world, but in the next." "Pray for sinners."

- One or more grade levels might be asked to write reflections on the message of God's love as expressed in the words of Mary to Bernadette Soubirous.
- One grade level might do a presentation on the life of Saint Bernadette Soubirous.

MARY IMMACULATE, PATRONESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- One or more grade levels might be asked to research and present the results of their research into how Mary became the Patroness of the United States of America.
- One grade or more grade levels might be asked to write reflections on what it means to have Mary Immaculate as the patroness of our country.

MARY IMMACULATE, PATRON SAINT OF ADVENT

- During her time of waiting and preparing to become the Mother of God, Mary traveled to help Elizabeth in her time of need. One or more grade levels could do an activity demonstrating how helping others helps us prepare to welcome Jesus into our lives once again.

CELEBRATING MASS AS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY ON DECEMBER 8

The joy, dignity, hope and promise of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is so great that Advent disappears as we bask in the splendor of God's mercy and infinite love.

- The Gloria should be sung on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
- The Creed is sung or recited
- The hymns of Advent should be set aside in favor of hymns that reflect the joy of this day

The Readings of the Day are:

- Genesis 3:9-15, 20 – I will put enmity between your offspring and hers.
- Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4 – Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.
- Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12 – He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.
- Luke 1:26-38 – Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.

What to consider when planning the music for this Liturgy:

- The text of the Entrance Antiphon in the *Roman Missal* quotes Isaiah 61: 10:
"I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul;
for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation,
and wrapped me in a mantle of justice,
like a bride adorned with her jewels." – *Roman Missal*
- The *Graduale Romanum* gives us several different texts from which to select the Entrance Introit or Antiphon:
 - "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful my God;
for he has clothed me with the garment of salvation,
and with the robe of righteousness he covered me,
as a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her jewels." – Isaiah 61:10
 - "I will extol you, O Lord, for you have lifted me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me." – Psalm 29
 - "Blessed are you, O Virgin Mary, by the Lord, the most high God,
beyond all women upon the earth. You are the glory of Jerusalem,
you are the joy of Israel, you are the honor of our people." – Judith 13: 23; 15: 10
- For the Offertory Antiphon, the *Graduale Romanum* quotes Luke 1: 28: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, alleluia.
- For the Communion Antiphon, both the *Roman Missal* and the *Graduale Romanum* point to Psalm 86: 3, and Luke 1: 49:
 - "Glorious things are spoken of you, O Mary; for from you arose the sun of justice." – *Roman Missal*
 - "Glorious things have been proclaimed concerning you, O Mary; for the Almighty has done marvelous things on your behalf." - *Graduale Romanum*
- Some hymn suggestions include:

A Canticle of the Turning	Magnificat (any of the many arrangements)
Ave Maria	Mary, Woman of the Promise
Hail Mary (any of the many arrangements)	My Soul Rejoices
Hail Mary, Gentle Woman	O Santissima
Holy Is His Name	Servant Song
Immaculate Mary	Sing A Joyful Song
I Sing the Mighty Power of God	Stainless the Maiden