

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Ready and Willing to Do God's Will **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** December 8, 2014 8:15 AM **Gn 3:9-15, 20; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38**
(When we are not indifferent to what is objectively good, we want to do God's will.)

Today we celebrate the **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin**. Now what does that mean? The simple answer is that **Mary was conceived without original sin**, but what is original sin? Some say original sin is the sin of our first parents, but that's not really true. That wasn't the first sin. **The first sin was the rebellion of prince of the angels**. Some people think this is just a myth, and we should forget about it, but it is actually at the basis of everything, the mystery of iniquity, the mystery of the battle between good and evil, that wouldn't exist the way it does if it weren't being carried on way beyond our sight and way beyond our understanding by forces much more powerful than ourselves. If we don't understand that, we understand very little about **this great drama being played out in our lives and through our lives**, nor do we understand **the great need for faith or hope or even what love is and isn't**. **So this is a very great mystery.**

In the story of Genesis the mystery is saying that God created this wonderful, beautiful world, this material world, the earth, the sun, the moon, all the planets and galaxies, and began life, created life, and promoted life. And the greatest of all living creatures was humanity, pictured here as Adam, meaning from the earth, *adama* is earth, and his wife. Now the point of this story is actually that **the rebellion of the evil one spilled over into this beautiful planet**. It began a process of spoliation, putrefaction, disintegration of the beauty and the purpose and the plan of God.

Now what was the root of this rebellion in the first people? Well, it has been disputed. It has been thought about. It has been argued about in the history of Christianity by many theologians. No one knows of course, but **I get the feeling that the initial problem was a**

sort of indifference to what is objectively good. People sometimes call this the sin of sloth. It's not a very good word. A sloth is a very nice animal; it's just slow. This is not about being slow. It's about being indifferent, **not caring.** It's about not caring, not caring about what is objectively good, holy, godly, what is according to **God's will and plan. To be indifferent to that is really the root of human disorder.** Anyway that's what the Book of Genesis presents to us as the backdrop for these great drama of salvation that begins with the call of Abraham, the Exodus, and so on.

But all that didn't really work because nobody really responded a hundred percent. What Luke is telling us is a new creation story. Now Mary comes and Mary isn't like everything else and everybody else. **Mary is really the beginning of something new.** On one hand she is somehow a descendent of Adam and Eve, but in another way she is not descended at all. She is completely new and original, fresh, unspoiled, **ready and willing to do whatever God wants.** This is her Immaculate Conception. She is ready and willing to do whatever God wants. She is not indifferent. She does care. And this caring and this willingness is something that goes way beyond what we would call personal interests. So when the angel comes to her he doesn't ask her; he tells her what is going to happen. "You will conceive." She says, "How can this be?" But she doesn't argue with him. She has not actually been asked if she will do this. God knows she will, because **she is not indifferent to what is objectively good.** And when we are not indifferent to what is objectively good, we want to do God's will. **She is now the model disciple.**