

the Virginity of Jesus and Mary

I believe that the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church
is God's teaching, without exception.

Jesus, Mary, I love you, save souls.¹

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“O Mary, conceived without sin,
pray for us who have recourse to thee.”²

The Visions of Blessed Anne Catherine

Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich describes the meeting of the parents of the Virgin Mary, Saint Joachim and Saint Ann, in an underground passageway of the Temple of Jerusalem.

“After passing through about a third of the passage Joachim came to a place in the midst of which stood a pillar in the form of a palm-tree with hanging leaves and fruits. Here he was met by Anna, radiant with happiness. They embraced each other with holy joy, and each told the other their good tidings. They were in a state of ecstasy and enveloped in a cloud of light. I saw this light issuing from a great host of angels, who were carrying the appearance of a high shining tower and hovering above the heads of Anna and Joachim. . . . I saw that this tower seemed to disappear between Anna and Joachim, who were enveloped in a glory of brightness. I understood, that as a result of the grace here given, the conception of Mary was as pure as all conceptions would have been but for the Fall. I had at the same time an indescribable vision. The heavens opened above them, and I saw the joy of the Holy Trinity and of the angels, and their participation in the mysterious blessing here bestowed on Mary’s parents. Anna and Joachim returned, praising God”³

Blessed Anne Catherine describes the Immaculate Conception as occurring miraculously. Joachim and Ann were in a state of holy ecstasy and were encompassed by a cloud of light from Heaven. There was a great number of holy angels present. The appearance of a tower was a symbolic representation of the Virgin Mary.⁴ Saint Ann and Saint Joachim were surrounded by a glory of brightness from God. The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary occurred solely and entirely by a miracle of God and not in the usual way, for the embrace of Saint Ann and Saint Joachim was a holy embrace, completely chaste and pure.

“The tower vanished between Joachim and Anne, both of whom were encompassed by brilliant light and glory. At the same moment the heavens above them opened, and I saw the joy of the Most Holy Trinity and of the angels over the Conception of Mary. Both Joachim and Anne were in a supernatural state. I learned that, at the moment in which they embraced and the light shone around them, the Immaculate Conception of Mary was accomplished.”⁵

Saint Joachim and Saint Ann met in a passageway under the consecrated part of the Temple of Jerusalem, at the very foundation of the Temple.⁶ At that time and in that place, solely by means of a miracle of God, the Virgin Mary was conceived in the womb of her mother, Saint Ann. The joy of the Holy Trinity and of the angels was in the Immaculate Virgin Conception of the Virgin Mary. Based on her visions from God, Blessed Anne Catherine describes the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary as a Virgin Conception.⁷

The Perfect Virginity of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the sinless Divine Son of God, the second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. The Virginity of Jesus Christ is entirely perfect and complete, encompassing His whole life from the first moment of His Holy Conception at the Incarnation, and continuing through His Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension to Heaven. The perfect Virginity of Jesus Christ necessarily includes a Virgin Conception and a Virgin Birth, so that nothing is lacking in Christ, who is the perfect fulfillment of the will of God.

The Virgin Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Mother of God, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. The Virgin Mary is entirely without stain of sin, being free from both original and personal sin throughout her entire life beginning from the first moment of her existence at her Immaculate

Conception. The Virgin Mary is entirely perfect, lacking in nothing, without flaw, omission, or imperfection.

The Virgin Mary is like Sacred Scripture, in that both are entirely without flaw, omission, or imperfection. Just as Sacred Scripture contains all those things and only those things that God wills, so also the Virgin Mary's life contains all those things and only those things that God wills. The Virgin Mary is, always has been, and always will be, all that God wills and only what God wills. She is the perfect fulfillment of the will of God. Yet the humanity of Christ is greater than she.

Since the Virgin Mary is entirely perfect, her Virginité must also be entirely perfect. The Holy Roman Catholic Church has always taught that the Virginité of Mary is entirely perfect, lacking in nothing, completely pure and spotless. The Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, infallibly defines the Holy Teaching of Christ about the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. This same holy and wonderful document also repeatedly reaffirms the teaching of the Church throughout the ages about the perfect Virginité of Mary, the Mother of God.

This Apostolic Constitution teaches that the Virgin Mary is: "immaculate in every respect; innocent, and verily most innocent; spotless, and entirely spotless; holy and removed from every stain of sin; all pure, all stainless, the very model of purity and innocence; more beautiful than beauty, more lovely than loveliness; more holy than holiness, singularly holy and most pure in soul and body; the one who surpassed all integrity and virginité; the only one who has become the dwelling place of all the graces of the most Holy Spirit."⁸

"Everyone is cognizant that this style of speech has passed almost spontaneously into the books of the most holy liturgy and the Offices of the Church, in which they occur so often and abundantly. In them, the Mother of God is invoked and praised as the one spotless and most beautiful dove, as a rose ever blooming, as perfectly pure, ever immaculate, and ever blessed. She is celebrated as innocence never sullied and as the second Eve who brought forth the Emmanuel."⁹

The Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, which infallibly defines the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven, teaches us that the Virgin Mary is "immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood . . ."¹⁰ In this way, the Holy Catholic Church clearly and explicitly teaches that the Virginité of Mary is entirely perfect.

The perfect Virginité of Jesus Christ requires that He have a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth. The Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ are a necessary and essential part of Christ's perfect Virginité. The Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ are in no way superfluous or extraneous to Christ's perfect Virginité. The Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ are an integral and meaningful part of His perfect Virginité.

The Virginité of Mary is also entirely perfect, therefore she also must necessarily have a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth. It cannot be otherwise. The Virgin Mary is perfect, therefore her Virginité must also be perfect. To be perfect is to be like Christ. Since Christ has a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth, Mary must also have a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth.

If the Virgin Mary did not have a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth, then her Virginité would be lacking something, would be less than the perfect Virginité seen in the life of Jesus Christ, and then she would not be "immaculate in every respect . . . the one who surpassed all integrity and virginité . . . the dwelling place of all the graces of the most Holy Spirit. . . . perfectly pure, ever immaculate, and ever blessed."¹¹ To deny the Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth of the Virgin Mary is to deny her perfect Virginité, which has been taught by the Holy Catholic Church and venerated by the saints and angels throughout the ages.

The Teaching of Sacred Scripture

God's Sacred Infallible Scripture clearly teaches, but in a hidden way, that the Virgin Mary had both a Virgin Conception and a Virgin Birth.

"Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Mt 11:11).

"I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (Lk 7:28).

Here Jesus teaches us that no one is greater than John the Baptist among that group of persons called “those born of women.” Birth implies conception. If a child has been born, that child must also have been conceived. So, when Jesus says “those born of women,” He means those conceived and born of women. No one among that group of persons conceived and born of women is greater than John.

We know well that both Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary are greater by far than John the Baptist. Therefore, Jesus and Mary are not members of that group referred to as “those born of women.” Yet we also know that both Jesus and Mary were conceived and born of women. Jesus was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary and born as her Son. The Virgin Mary was conceived in the womb of Saint Ann and born as her daughter. Both Jesus and Mary had mothers. Therefore, the expression “those born of women” does not refer to all those who have mothers, nor to all those who have been conceived and born.

Jesus was conceived of a woman, but by means of a miracle of God in a Virgin Conception, not in the usual manner of conception. Jesus was born of a woman, but by means of a miracle of God in a Virgin Birth, not in the usual manner of birth. That is why Jesus is not included as one of “those born of women.” Jesus was not conceived and born in the usual, merely human way, but was conceived and born by means of a miracle of God. The phrase “those born of women” means those conceived and born in the usual way, and not by means of a miracle of God. The expression “those born of women” refers only to those persons whose conceptions and births are not accomplished in a miraculous and virginal manner. And this phrase cannot refer to Jesus and Mary, since they are both greater than John the Baptist.¹²

Since the Virgin Mary is also not one of “those born of women,” she who is most like Christ was also not conceived and born in the usual human way, but rather was conceived and born solely by a miracle of God, in a manner which was wholly virginal and pure. The humanity of the Virgin Mary is like the humanity of Jesus Christ in all things, even in conception and birth. The Virgin Mary is the perfect reflection of the humanity of Christ: like Him in His perfect Virginity, like Him in His Virgin Conception, like Him in His Virgin Birth, like Him in all things except His Divinity. The life of the Virgin Mary is lacking in nothing, flawless and perfect in all things, yet the life of Christ Jesus is greater still.

The Immaculate Virgin Conception of the Virgin Mary

From the first moment of her existence, the Virgin Mary was preserved free from all sin and all tendency towards sin. Yet, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was miraculous, not only in that she was preserved free from all sin, but also in the manner by which her Immaculate Conception occurred. God desired that the Virginity of Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, be so perfect, complete, and all-encompassing that even the manner of her Immaculate Conception was required by God to be entirely Virginal, occurring solely and entirely by a miracle of God and not in the usual way. Therefore, solely by means of a most wonderful and singular miracle of God, the Virgin Mary was conceived of both her parents, Saint Joachim and Saint Ann, without sexual union and within their complete purity of body, heart, mind, and soul. This teaching is trustworthy and true; it cannot be otherwise.

It is a part of the total and constant Virginity of Mary, the Mother of God, that even the manner of her Immaculate Conception was completely Virginal, occurring solely and entirely by means of a miracle from the Mercy of God, and not by means of human will or action. Saint Joachim and Saint Ann did not conceive the Virgin Mary by means of marital relations. The Immaculate Virgin Conception of the Virgin Mary occurred in a manner which was wholly virginal and miraculous. Such a true virgin conception could never be brought about by nature or science or human intervention, but solely by a miracle of God. Even so, by the power of God, the body of the Virgin Mary came from both her father, Saint Joachim, and her mother, Saint Ann. The Virgin Mary has as her immediate ancestors both Saint Joachim and Saint Ann. Saint Joachim is the Virgin Mary’s real, biological father and Saint Ann is the Virgin Mary’s real, biological mother, yet the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary occurred solely by means of a miracle of God. This teaching is true and worthy of full acceptance by all Christians.

To those who doubt this teaching, I say, “Which is more virginal, to be conceived with sexual union, or to be conceived without and solely by a miracle of God?” The answer must be that it is more virginal to be conceived without sexual relations, by an act of God rather than by a human act.

So then, do you really believe that the ever-Virgin Mary is less virginal than she could be? On the contrary, Mary could not be any more a Virgin than she is, for God willed that the Mother of God be perfect in every way. Therefore, and without any doubt, the perfect-Virgin Mary was conceived solely by a miracle of God and born solely by a miracle of God. Otherwise, she would not be the perfect Virgin that she is.

The Virginity of Mary, the Mother of the Messiah, is without flaw, omission, or imperfection. To have a flaw is to have something that one ought not to have. Mary's perfect Virginity is without flaw, containing nothing contrary to the will of God. An omission is something lacking that ought to be present. Mary's perfect Virginity is without omission, lacking in nothing, containing everything according to the will of God. An imperfection is when something that ought to be present is present, but in a lesser form and not entirely as it ought to be. Mary's perfect Virginity is without imperfection, and is everything that it could ever be and should ever be, in complete fulfillment of the perfect will of God. The perfect Virginity of Mary, the Mother of God, is three times perfect and entirely perfect, without flaw, omission, or imperfection. The Virginity of Mary, the most pure Mother of our Divine Savior Jesus Christ, is a perfect reflection of the will of God.

May all faithful Christians accept this teaching that the Virginity of Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, is entirely perfect, complete, and all-encompassing, including both her Immaculate Virgin Conception and her Holy Virgin Birth. Whoever accepts this teaching will be blessed by God; whoever rejects this teaching will be punished by God. If any fight against this teaching, God will fight against them. Amen.

The Lineage of Jesus and Mary

The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was like the Holy Conception of Jesus Christ in that both were holy, virginal, and miraculous, occurring solely and entirely by the power of God. But the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was different from the Holy Conception of Jesus Christ in that the body of Jesus came only from the body of His holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereas the body of the Virgin Mary came from both Saint Joachim and Saint Ann, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Virgin Mary is the sole immediate ancestor of Jesus Christ. Jesus has no human father; God alone is the Father of Jesus Christ. But Saint Joachim and Saint Ann are both the immediate ancestors of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mary is of the lineage of both Saint Joachim and Saint Ann.

God's Sacred Infallible Scripture makes it clear that Saint Joachim is the Virgin Mary's real, biological father. In the Gospel of Luke, the genealogy of Jesus is given as follows:

"Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat . . . the son of Nathan, the son of David . . . the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham . . . the son of Adam, the son of God." (Luke 3:23, 24, 31, 34, 38).

According to Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, Saint Joachim, the father of the Virgin Mary, was called Heli before he took the name Joachim.¹³ A similar name change occurred with Abraham, who was formerly called Abram (Gen 17:5); Saint Peter the Apostle, who was formerly called Simon (John 1:42); Saint Paul the Apostle, who was formerly called Saul (Acts 13:9); and Seraphia, who was later called Saint Veronica.¹⁴ So the Gospel of Luke names Saint Joachim (also called Heli) as being in Jesus' lineage.

Seventy-seven generations are named by Sacred Scripture, from Adam the first, to Abraham the twenty-first, to David the thirty-fifth, to Jesus the seventy-seventh. Joseph is named with the words, "being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph" because Joseph is not of Jesus' lineage. Joseph is counted in this genealogy from the Gospel of Luke, even though he is not the father of Jesus, because he was the husband of the Virgin Mary. His name stands in her place; the Virgin Mary is the unnamed generation between her father, Heli, and her Son, Jesus.

Since Joachim (Heli) is named by Sacred Scripture (without the words "as was supposed") in the lineage from Abraham to David to Mary to Jesus, Joachim must be the Virgin Mary's real, biological father and her immediate ancestor, even though she was conceived solely and entirely by a miracle of God. In this way the Gospel of Luke gives us the lineage of Christ Jesus and the Virgin Mary, who were both descendants of Joachim (Heli), David, Abraham, and Adam.

The Virgin Mary's Own Words

The Virgin Mary described her Immaculate Conception to Saint Bridget.

“And it is a truth that I was conceived without original sin, and not in sin; because, as my Son and I never sinned, so no marriage was more holy than that from which I was born.”¹⁵

Here the Virgin Mary is telling us that she was preserved free from all sin and all tendency to sin. She adds the phrase “and not in sin” because her Immaculate Conception was completely virginal, occurring solely by a miracle of God and within her parents’ complete purity of body, heart, mind, and soul. The Virgin Mary says that she was born from the marriage of her parents, because both Saint Joachim and Saint Ann are her true, biological parents and her immediate ancestors, even though she was conceived solely by a miracle of God.

The Virgin Mary also said to Saint Bridget:

“A golden hour was my conception, for then began the principle of the salvation of all, and darkness hastened to light. God wished to do in His work something singular and hidden from the world, as He did in the dry rod blooming. But know that my conception was not known to all, because God wished that as the natural law and the voluntary election of good and bad preceded the written law, and the written law followed, restraining all inordinate notions, so it pleased God, that His friends should piously doubt of my conception, and that each should show his zeal till the truth became clear in its preordained time.”¹⁶

The work of the Redemption of the world by Jesus Christ began with the Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception.¹⁷ This was the beginning of “the principle of the salvation of all.” This was the beginning of the building of the Temple of the Body of Jesus Christ (John 2:20-21).

Mary is saying that her conception was both “singular and hidden from the world.” Her conception was singular in that she was preserved free from original sin. No one else has ever received this grace of being conceived and born of parents who are sinners, yet of being preserved free from the original sin which comes from being conceived and born of sinners. Jesus did not have original sin, but He was not born of a sinner, He was born of the sinless Virgin Mary. Jesus did not need to be preserved from original sin because His mother Mary did not have original sin to pass on to her Child.

Mary’s conception was hidden from the world in that the Immaculate Conception occurred solely by a miracle of God, not by means of marital relations. This was not known to all. After a time, people found out that Saint Ann was with child, but they likely assumed that the conception occurred in the usual way. Saint Ann and Saint Joachim knew that their holy child’s conception occurred solely by a miracle of God; they had permanently ceased from marital relations beginning at least several months prior to the Immaculate Conception.¹⁸

God’s friends have piously doubted of the Virgin Mary’s conception; first, because for a time all Christians did not know that the Immaculate Conception preserved Mary free from original sin. Second, some of God’s friends, even today, piously doubt that her conception was virginal and miraculous.

The phrase “till the truth became clear in its preordained time” refers to the time when the Church made clear her teaching on the Immaculate Conception, that from the first moment of her existence the Virgin Mary was preserved free from all sin and all tendency towards sin. And it refers to the time when the Church will make clear her teaching that the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was entirely virginal and miraculous.

The Teaching of the Church

Is it currently the teaching of the Church that the Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception and Holy Birth each occurred in a completely virginal manner, solely by a miracle of God? I understand, clearly and without any doubt whatsoever, that this teaching is God’s true teaching, found in both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, and is therefore a part of the Deposit of Faith lovingly guarded by the Holy Roman Catholic Church. The Church has not yet explicitly and authoritatively defined the Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth of the Virgin Mary. However, this teaching is the necessary and inexorable conclusion of the explicitly taught Sacred Tradition of the Church that Mary’s Virginité is entirely perfect: “immaculate in every respect; innocent, and verily most innocent; spotless, and entirely spotless; holy and removed from every stain of sin; all pure, all stainless, the very model of

purity and innocence . . . singularly holy and most pure in soul and body; the one who surpassed all integrity and virginity”¹⁹

The teaching that Mary’s Virginity is entirely perfect is found in the Sacred Tradition of the Church and is therefore a part of the Deposit of Faith. The Church has never taught that the Virginity of Mary is flawed, lacking, or limited in any way. The Church has always taught and expounded upon the perfection of Mary, including her perfect Virginity. The Church teaches that the perfect Virginity of Jesus Christ includes a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth. Therefore, the Church’s teaching that Mary’s Virginity is entirely perfect implicitly contains the teaching that the perfect Virginity of Mary includes a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth.

The teaching that the Virgin Mary’s perfect Virginity necessarily includes a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth is also found in Sacred Scripture, in the words of Jesus about the holiness of John the Baptist (Mt 11:11; Lk 7:28). In Sacred Scripture, as in Sacred Tradition, this teaching is also present in a manner which is implicit yet irrefutable. Both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition witness to this true teaching. Therefore, the teaching that Mary’s perfect Virginity includes a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth must one day be the explicit teaching of the Church.

I believe that the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church is God’s teaching, without exception. I am fallible, but God is infallible and this teaching is God’s teaching. I write this teaching and believe it and teach it, but this teaching comes from God, not me. This teaching is part of the Holy Deposit of Faith entrusted to the Children of God.

Saint Joachim and Saint Ann

The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary occurred in a most chaste and virginal manner by the power and Mercy of God. It is not that Saint Ann and Saint Joachim were virgins. They had a most holy and complete marriage. They had conceived a child, Mary Heli (cf. John 19:25), many years earlier, in the usual way.²⁰ Yet the Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception occurred solely by a miracle of God, without marital relations and within her parents’ complete purity of body, heart, mind, and soul. God alone could bring about such a virginal and miraculous conception.²¹

Saint Joachim and Saint Ann had been separated for several months prior to their meeting in the passageway under the Temple.²² They had ceased from marital relations beginning at least several months before the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, and they never resumed having marital relations,²³ because after the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary their union could not have produced a greater fruit for God and for all creation.

The Immaculate Conception in Sacred Scripture

The Immaculate Conception is directly referred to by Sacred Scripture in the Gospel of John.

“The Jews then said to him, ‘What sign have you to show us for doing this?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ The Jews then said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?’ But he spoke of the temple of his body.” (John 2:18-21).

When the Jews said to Jesus, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple,” they were referring to the temple buildings. When Jesus spoke to the Jews, He was referring to the temple of His body. But all of Sacred Scripture is God speaking to us. Therefore, in this passage, Sacred Scripture is using the words of the Jews about the temple to refer both to the temple buildings and to Jesus’ body.

Sacred Scripture is telling us that the body of Jesus had, at that point in time, taken 46 years to build, beginning with the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. The rebuilding of the Second Temple of Jerusalem is also counted as beginning 46 years earlier. So then, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary occurred at the time of the rebuilding of the Second Temple of Jerusalem.²⁴

God would not allow the perfect and holy Christ to be born of a sinful woman. So, in order to build the Perfect Temple of the Body of Jesus Christ, God began by preserving the Virgin Mary from sin, from all sin and all tendency towards sin, from the first moment of her existence in the womb of her mother, Saint Ann.

The Purification of the Temple

At the time of the Passover, Jesus purified the temple of Jerusalem. “And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple . . .” (Mark 11:15; cf. John 2:13-17). He then spoke about his death and Resurrection (John 2:18-21), which purifies the Church.

The act of Jesus, the Son of God, purifying the temple is symbolic of the Immaculate Conception. In the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, God acted to purify a part of humanity in order to build the temple of Christ’s body. After purifying the temple, Jesus speaks about His death and Resurrection, because it is through the death and Resurrection of Jesus that the Virgin Mary was kept pure from all sin from the first moment of her existence. The Immaculate Conception occurred by the power of the Passion, Crucifixion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

By the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus, God preserved the Virgin Mary from all sin, purifying a part of humanity, so that her Son Jesus could purify all humanity by His Crucifixion and Resurrection. God made the human nature of the Virgin Mary pure and holy, so that Mary could be the first and most perfect follower of her pure and holy Son, the Son of God. Yet, it is only by the saving power of her Son Jesus Christ’s suffering, death, and Resurrection that Mary could be perfect in purity and holiness and so be the Mother of the Savior, who suffered and died for her and for all.

Jesus is God. Therefore, it is also true that Jesus Himself brought about the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, so that He could become Incarnate and could suffer and die for her and for us all. In the Immaculate Conception, Jesus purified a part of humanity, so that He could later become a part of humanity, and suffer and die for His mother Mary and for all.

The Place and Time of the Immaculate Conception

It was fitting that the Immaculate Virgin Conception should occur in a passageway under the consecrated part of the temple. The temple of Jerusalem was a symbol and foreshadowing of the Temple which is the humanity of Jesus. The Immaculate Conception was the essential and indispensable beginning which prepared for the subsequent creation of the humanity of Jesus at the Incarnation of God. The Immaculate Conception is the foundation of the humanity of Jesus, and so the Immaculate Conception took place at the very foundation of the temple.

It was fitting that the Immaculate Virgin Conception should occur at the time of the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem. The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was the beginning of the building of the Temple of Jesus’ body, and so the Immaculate Conception rightly took place at the time of the beginning of the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem. Humanity is a temple for God now that God has become a part of humanity in Jesus, who is God made human. The rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem symbolizes the renewal which comes to humanity through Jesus and Mary, beginning especially with Mary’s Immaculate Virgin Conception. The rebuilding of the temple symbolizes the rebuilding of humanity through Jesus and Mary into a fitting temple in which God dwells.

The Sinless Virgin Mary

In the Immaculate Virgin Conception, the Most Holy Trinity blessed the Virgin Mary through her Divine Son Jesus Christ by keeping her entirely free from original sin and by giving her the grace to be entirely free from personal sin. Throughout her entire life on earth, the Virgin Mary received from the Most Holy Trinity through her Divine Son Jesus Christ the grace to be entirely free from all sin and all tendency towards sin.

Why should the Virgin Mary be exempted from sin?
Because from Mary came Jesus,
who is without sin;
because through Mary came Jesus,
who takes away sin.
So it is fitting that Christ Jesus should take away sin
through the Virgin Mary
and beginning most completely with the Virgin Mary.

The Virgin Birth of Mary

Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich describes the Virgin Birth of Mary, as revealed to her in visions from God.

“Anna opened the doors of a little cupboard in the wall which contained a casket with holy objects. . . . Anna knelt before the little cupboard with one of the women on each side and the third behind her. . . . Then I saw the room filled with supernatural light which became more intense as it wove itself round Anna. The women sank to the ground as though stunned. The light round Anna took the exact form of the burning bush of Moses on Horeb, and I could no longer see her. The whole flame streamed inwards; and then I suddenly saw that Anna received the shining child Mary in her hands, wrapped her in her mantle, pressed her to her heart, and laid her naked on the stool in front of the holy relics, still continuing her prayer.”²⁵

St. Ann felt no pain in Mary’s birth. She prayed humbly to God, and God provided everything needed. The Virgin Mary went directly from her mother’s womb to the outside world solely by a miracle of God and without any part of the usual process of delivery. The Virgin Mother of God was born by solely by a miracle of God, in a true perfect Virgin Birth, and not in the usual way.

“In the moment when the new-born child lay in the arms of her holy mother Anna, I saw that at the same time the child was presented in heaven in the sight of the Most Holy Trinity, and greeted with unspeakable joy by all the heavenly host.”²⁶

The Virgin Life of the Virgin Mary

The Church speaks of the total Virginité of Mary in the Eucharistic prayer of Holy Mass:

“In union with the whole Church we honor Mary, the ever-virgin mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God.”²⁷

The title “ever-virgin mother of Jesus Christ” means not only that Mary kept a virgin marriage to Joseph, but also that she is always a true and complete Virgin, in every way, throughout her entire life. To be ever-virgin, Mary must have both a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth. If the conception and birth of the Virgin Mary were not virginal and miraculous, then she would not be the ever-Virgin Mother of God that she is. Beginning with the first moment of her existence at her Immaculate Virgin Conception, the Virgin Mary remained always a Virgin, in every way and at all times, throughout her entire life, and continuing without ceasing through the end of her life on earth.²⁸

Other holy women come of age, marry, conceive, and give birth in the usual way, but not so with the Virgin Mary. The womb of the Virgin Mary never bled. At no time did God allow the holy womb which would carry and which did carry the Savior of the world to bleed, as with other women.

The true and complete Virginité of Mary includes her entire self. Never in her life did the least unchaste desire pass across her Virgin Heart. Never in her life was the least unchaste thought found even briefly in her Virgin Mind. The Virgin Mary never had the least unchaste desire, thought, word, or action. She was always completely pure and chaste in body, mind, heart, and soul.

Furthermore, Mary was entirely virginal, not merely by the absence of things contrary to chastity, but also by the perfect presence of all things pure and holy. True perfect virginité is not merely an absence of things impure, but also the presence of purity proceeding from the True Pure Spirit of God. Therefore, every desire present in the heart of the Virgin Mary was true, pure, holy, and pleasing to the Most Holy Trinity. Every thought ever entering into the mind of the Virgin Mary was true, pure, holy, and pleasing to the One True God. Her entire soul was a continual hymn of truth, purity, holiness, and complete devotion to the will of God.

Other holy disciples of Christ have been called “virgin” by the Church. Other true disciples of Christ have kept themselves pure for Christ. But, compared to the perfect Virgin Mary, not even the holiest of Saints can be called a perfect Virgin. Even the most virginal of Saints does not have virginité in the manner and to the degree of the most pure Virgin Mary. Some virgins have sinned against virginité by the least impure thought or desire, and so their virginité is not perfect. Other virgins are not entirely virginal in body and soul, having been conceived and born in the usual way, having been conceived and born with original sin. And even if some holy person was to remain entirely free from every unchaste thought, desire, and action for a long period of time, such a one would not have anywhere near to the degree of presence of purity found in Mary, the perfect imitator of the Son of

God. Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary are true perfect virgins; everyone else falls short of the mark. Next to Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, no other human being is perfect in virginity.

The complete Virginity of Mary includes every aspect of virginity, in body, mind, heart, and soul, throughout her entire life, on earth as in Heaven. The Virgin Mary never failed in the least to please God in all things throughout her entire being and throughout her entire life. So complete was the Virgin Mary's love for God that she was entirely faithful to God in every way and at all times. The Virgin Mary's complete and total dedication to God made possible her complete and total Virginity, and the Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth of her Divine Son Jesus Christ.

The Virgin Marriage of Joseph and Mary

The marriage of the Virgin Mary to Saint Joseph was virginal, chaste, and pure. The Virgin Mary said to Saint Bridget:

“Know most certainly that before he married me, Joseph knew in the Holy Ghost, that I had vowed my virginity to my God, and was immaculate in thought, word, and deed, and that he espoused me with the intention of serving me, holding me in the light of a sovereign mistress, not a wife. And I knew most certainly in the Holy Ghost that my perpetual virginity would remain intact, although by a secret dispensation of God I was married to a husband.”²⁹

When Joseph realized that his wife, the Virgin Mary, was with child, he did not suspect her of infidelity. He knew that she was faithful to God.

“But when I had consented to the annunciation of God, Joseph, seeing my womb increase by the operation of the Holy Ghost, feared vehemently: not suspecting anything amiss in me, but remembering the sayings of the prophets, foretelling that the Son of God should be born of a virgin, deeming himself unworthy to serve such a mother, until the angel in a dream ordered him not to fear, but to minister unto me in charity.”³⁰

A True Virgin Marriage

In the present day, a man and woman often get engaged for a period of time, even as long as a year or more, before their wedding ceremony and marriage. The word ‘betrothed’ is used today to mean ‘engaged to be married.’ But in biblical times, the betrothal was considered to be the beginning of the marriage.

According to Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, when Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary were betrothed, there was an elaborate ceremony, which was their wedding ceremony.³¹ This ceremony marked the beginning of the marriage of Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary. Even though the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph kept always a virgin marriage, Sacred Scripture nevertheless teaches that they had a true marriage.

In Jewish religious law, which is the Law of God, a virgin betrothed to a man is legally considered to be his wife, even before they come to live together (Deut 22:23-24). In the book of Deuteronomy, God commanded that the man who lies with another man's wife be put to death (Deut 22:22). The penalty for adultery at that time in religious history was death. But if a man lies with a virgin who is not betrothed, he is punished, but allowed to live, because his sin is not that of adultery (Deut 22:28-29). Now, in the case of a man who lies with a betrothed virgin, the man is put to death (Deut 22:23-27). The man who lies with the betrothed virgin is given the penalty for adultery because the betrothed virgin is legally another man's wife. The man is stoned to death, “because he violated his neighbor's wife.” (Deut 22:24). Therefore, under the Law of God, the Virgin Mary was legally Joseph's wife, beginning with their betrothal, even though she remained a Virgin throughout their entire marriage.

The Promise Fulfilled Through Joseph

God gave the Jewish people the Promise of a Messiah, who would be a descendant of Abraham and of David. This Promise is fulfilled partly through Joseph, a descendant of Abraham and of David, who was legally the husband of Mary, the Mother of the Messiah. Joseph was Jesus' father by religious law (though not by the body). That is why the Gospel of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Joseph, but calls it the genealogy of Jesus (Mt 1:1, 16). One way that the Promise of a Messiah descended from Abraham and from David was fulfilled is through the lineage of Saint Joseph, the

legal father of Jesus Christ: “. . . and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.” (Mt 1:16).

For this reason, it was important that the betrothal of Joseph and Mary occur before the Incarnation, the Virgin Conception of Jesus. In this way, Joseph, in fulfillment of God’s Promise, was legally the husband of Mary and legally the father of Jesus the Messiah from the first moment of Jesus’ human existence.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly.” (Mt 1:18-19; cf. Lk 1:27).

In this passage, Sacred Scripture teaches that the betrothal ceremony was the beginning of the marriage of Joseph and Mary. They “had been betrothed,” meaning that the betrothal ceremony had already taken place. The phrase “before they came together,” means before they began to live in the same dwelling together. Yet Sacred Scripture still calls Joseph “her husband,” because the betrothal was the beginning of the marriage. And these three things: they were betrothed, they had not yet moved into the same house, and they were already considered married, are stated together, one after another. Thus, Sacred Scripture clearly teaches that the marriage of the Virgin Mary to Saint Joseph began before the Virgin Conception of Jesus Christ.

The Promise Fulfilled Through Mary

The Gospel of Luke (Lk 3:23-38) gives a different account of the genealogy of Jesus than is given by the Gospel of Matthew. The reason for the difference is that Matthew is giving the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, Jesus’ father by law, whereas Luke is giving the lineage of Jesus through the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.” (Mt 1:1, 2, 6, 16).

“Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat . . . the son of Nathan, the son of David . . . the son of Abraham” (Lk 3:23, 24, 31, 34).

Notice that Joseph is descended from David by his son Solomon, whereas Mary is descended from David by his son Nathan. Jesus was born only of Mary, not of Joseph and Mary. Even so, the Promise that the Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham and of David was fulfilled in two ways. The Promise was fulfilled through Joseph, because, being the husband of Mary, he was the father of Jesus Christ under the Law of God. And the Promise was fulfilled through the Virgin Mary, who is also a descendant of Abraham and of David, because Jesus was conceived and born of her, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Virgin Conception of Jesus Christ

“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.” (Luke 1:26-27).

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that she would bear a son, she was already betrothed to Joseph. Yet she did not assume that Joseph would be the father of her child. “And Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I have no husband?’ ” (Luke 1:34). Mary asked the angel how she could bear a child, because she knew God’s will that her marriage to Joseph remain virginal. Mary had already been betrothed to Joseph, yet she had no husband in the usual sense of the word, for she had vowed her virginity to God.

“And the angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.’ ” (Luke 1:35; cf. Mt 1:18-25).

God's Sacred Infallible Scripture clearly teaches that the Holy Conception of Jesus Christ was entirely virginal, occurring solely and entirely by the power of the Holy Spirit, and not in the usual way. Jesus is not merely human, but is God Incarnate. God is the Father of Jesus, and Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is God.

God gave Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich a vision of the Annunciation and of the Virgin Conception of Jesus Christ.

"Mary let the veil fall over her face and crossed her hands (but not her fingers) before her breast. I saw her fervently praying thus for a long time, with her face raised to heaven. She was imploring God for redemption, for the promised King, and beseeching Him that her prayer might have some share in sending Him. She knelt long in an ecstasy of prayer; then she bowed her head on to her breast."³²

Then a light poured down from heaven and the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Blessed Virgin Mary. They spoke, as described in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 1:26-38).

"As soon as the Blessed Virgin had spoken the words, 'Be it done unto me according to thy word', I saw the Holy Ghost in the appearance of a winged figure . . . from whose breast and hands I saw three streams of light pouring down towards the right side of the Blessed Virgin and meeting as they reached her. This light streaming in upon her right side caused the Blessed Virgin to become completely transfused with radiance and as though transparent . . . her whole form was shining and transfused with light."³³

"The Blessed Virgin knew that she had conceived the Messiah, the Son of the Most High. All that was within her was open to the eyes of her spirit."³⁴

The Virgin Conception of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary occurred solely by a miracle of God. The Holy Spirit brought about the Virgin Conception of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, within the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin Conception of Jesus Christ occurred in a wholly miraculous manner, which cannot be duplicated by nature, science, or human intervention.

The Virgin Mary described the Virgin Conception of her Son Jesus Christ to Saint Bridget:

"Still I deemed myself unworthy, and asked the angel not why or when, but how it should be done, that I, unworthy, should be the Mother of God, not knowing man. And the angel answered me as I said: 'Nothing is impossible to God . . .' Hearing the words of the angel, I felt a most fervent desire to be the Mother of God, and my soul spoke in love: 'Here I am, let Thy will be done in me.' At this word my Son was instantly conceived in my womb, with unspeakable exultation of my soul and my whole body."³⁵

The body of Jesus, that is, the physical part of the humanity of Jesus, came from the body of Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The human soul of Jesus was created by God (as are all souls). The human life of Jesus our Savior began at conception, (just as the lives of all human beings begin at conception). The Divinity of Jesus Christ was united to His humanity from the first moment that His humanity was created at His Holy Virgin Conception. At the beginning of the human life of Jesus Christ, His body, His soul, and His Divinity were at once united. The body was not created first, awaiting a soul; nor was the soul created first, awaiting a body. And body and soul, created together, did not wait to be united to the Eternal Divinity of the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. In one and the same instant, the body and soul of Jesus were created and united to His Eternal Divinity.

The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ

The Virgin Mary spoke to Saint Bridget about the presence of the Son of God in her womb and about His Virgin Birth.

"And when I had Him in my womb, I bore Him without pain, without any weight or feeling of inconvenience. In all things I humbled myself, knowing that He was almighty whom I bore. And when I brought Him forth, I brought Him forth without pain and sin, as I conceived Him . . . And as He entered all my members with the joy of my whole soul, so with the joy of my whole body, my soul exulting with ineffable joy, He came forth, my virginity untouched."³⁶

“And therefore, know truly, that although men, according to human ideas, would assert that my Son was born in the usual way, it is true beyond all doubt that He was born as I tell thee and thou hast seen.”³⁷

The Virgin Mary clearly told Saint Bridget that her Divine Son Jesus Christ was not born in the usual way, but rather in a way which was entirely virginal.

God also showed the Virgin Birth of Jesus to Saint Bridget:

“When all these things were ready, then the Virgin, kneeling with great reverence, placed herself in prayer, with her back to the crib, her face eastward, raised to Heaven. She stood with uplifted hands, and eyes fixed on Heaven, rapt as it were, in an ecstasy of contemplation, inebriated with the divine sweetness. And while she thus stood in prayer, I beheld her Child move in her womb, and at once in a moment, and in the twinkling of an eye, she brought forth her Son, from whom such ineffable light and splendor radiated, that the sun could not be compared to it . . . and so sudden and momentary was that mode of bearing, that I could not perceive or discern how, or in what part she brought forth. Nevertheless, I immediately beheld that glorious Babe lying naked and most pure on the ground, His flesh most clean from all filth or impurity. . . . When the Virgin perceived that she had been delivered, she immediately bowed her head, and joining her hands, adored her Son with great respect and reverence, saying: ‘Welcome, my God, and my Lord, and my Son.’ ”³⁸

Saint Bridget says, “His flesh most clean from all filth or impurity,” meaning that there was no blood or fluids or anything else on the body of Jesus when He was born. The miracle of the birth of Jesus Christ was perfect and complete. There was no need to cut an umbilical cord. There was no afterbirth. Everything necessary was provided by God miraculously. No midwife was needed because the miracle of the birth of Jesus Christ was not lacking in any way. And the same is true for the miraculous birth of the Virgin Mary.

The birth of Jesus Christ occurred solely and entirely by a miracle of God and not in the usual way. When Jesus was born, He went from His mother Mary’s womb to the outside world immediately and directly by a miracle of God, without any part whatsoever of the usual process of delivery. First He was in the womb, then He was out of the womb, without having to travel through any places in between. God alone could bring about such a virginal and miraculous birth. The Virgin Births of both Jesus and Mary occurred solely, entirely, and necessarily by means of a miracle of God and not in the usual way.³⁹

The visions given by God to Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich also confirm that the birth of Jesus Christ was virginal and miraculous.

“Joseph suggested to the Blessed Virgin that he should summon to her assistance some pious women whom he knew in Bethlehem. She declined, however, saying that she needed no human help.”⁴⁰

“I saw the radiance round the Blessed Virgin ever growing greater. . . . At midnight she was wrapt in an ecstasy of prayer. I saw her lifted from the earth, so that I saw the ground beneath her. Her hands were crossed on her breast. The radiance about her increased Then I no longer saw the roof of the cave; a pathway of light opened above Mary, rising with ever-increasing glory towards the height of heaven. . . . Meanwhile the Blessed Virgin, borne up in ecstasy, was now gazing downwards, adoring her God, whose Mother she had become and who lay on the earth before her in the form of a helpless new-born child. I saw our Redeemer as a tiny child, shining with a light that overpowered all the surrounding radiance, and lying on the carpet at the Blessed Virgin’s knees. It seemed to me as if he were at first quite small and then grew before my eyes. But the movement of the intense radiance was such that I cannot say for certain how I saw it.”⁴¹

The Eucharistic prayer from Holy Mass also clearly teaches that the birth of Jesus Christ was a Virgin Birth.

“In union with the whole Church
we celebrate that day (night)
when Mary without loss of her virginity
gave this world its savior.
We honor her,
the ever-virgin mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord and God.”⁴²

The phrase “without loss of her virginity” means that Jesus left the womb of the Virgin Mary solely by a miracle of God and not in the usual way. Jesus went from being inside the womb to being outside the womb solely by means of the power of God. This is what is meant by a virgin birth; other explanations are insufficient and unacceptable. The births of both Jesus and Mary were Virgin Births. God is Truth; whoever loves God will love the truth.

One Teaching

Jesus Christ is perfect in all things, including His Perfect Virginity. God alone is the Father of Jesus Christ. God required the Holy Conception of Jesus Christ to be a miraculous Virgin Conception. Since Christ had a Virgin Conception, He must also have had a Virgin Birth, for the Virginity of Jesus Christ is entirely perfect in every way. The perfect, complete, and all-encompassing Virginity of Jesus Christ extends even to His perfect Virgin Conception and His perfect Virgin Birth. This teaching is trustworthy and true; it cannot be otherwise.

God would not give the perfect-Virgin Jesus Christ a Virgin Conception within the womb of His mother, Mary, without also giving Him a Virgin Birth out of the womb of His mother, Mary. His Holy Conception was virginal and miraculous, therefore His Holy Birth was also virginal and miraculous. Every perfect Virgin must have both a Virgin Conception and a Virgin Birth. Jesus Christ is perfect in Virginity. Therefore, Jesus must have had both a Virgin Conception and a Virgin Birth, for without both His Virginity would not be perfect, complete, and all-encompassing. The Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth are joined by God and cannot be separated.

The Virginity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is so perfect, complete, and all-encompassing that even His Holy Conception and His Holy Birth were entirely Virginal, occurring solely and entirely by a miracle of God and not in the usual way. It is the infallible teaching of the Holy Catholic Church that both the Holy Conception and the Holy Birth of Jesus Christ were entirely virginal and miraculous. This is the truth; whoever loves God loves truth.

The life of the Virgin Mary is a perfect reflection of the life of Jesus Christ. The Virgin Mary is perfect and is the chosen Mother of God because she resembles Christ in all things except His Divinity. The lives of Jesus and Mary are joined by God and cannot be separated. God gave a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth to the perfect-Virgin Jesus Christ. Therefore, God also gave a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth to His Mother, the perfect-Virgin Mary. God would not give Jesus Christ a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth without also giving His Holy Mother a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth. God wills that the Virgin Mary be like Christ in all things except His Divinity.

The perfect Virginity of Jesus Christ requires that His Mother Mary also be perfect in Virginity. The perfect Virginity of Jesus, the Son of God, brought about the perfect Virginity of Mary, the Mother of God. The perfect Virginity of Mary results from and is dependent upon the perfect Virginity of Jesus. The Virgin Mary is both a perfect Virgin and the perfect Mother. The Virgin Mary was required by God to be free from all sin and all tendency to sin, throughout her entire life, so that she could be the sinless Mother of the sinless Son of God. In the same way, the Virgin Mary was required by God to be entirely perfect in Virginity, throughout her entire life, including her Immaculate Virgin Conception and her Holy Virgin Birth, so that she could be the perfect-Virgin Mother of the perfect-Virgin Jesus Christ. This teaching is trustworthy and true; it cannot be otherwise.

God required that the Virgin Mary be conceived within the womb of her mother, Saint Ann, in a virginal manner, by means of a miracle of God. God also required that the Virgin Mary be born out of the womb of her mother, Saint Ann, in a virginal manner, by means of a miracle of God. God would not give the perfect-Virgin Mary a Virgin Conception within the womb of her mother, Saint Ann, without also giving her a Virgin Birth out of the womb of her mother, Saint Ann. The Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth are joined by God and cannot be separated.

The Virginity of Mary, the Mother of God, is entirely perfect, complete, and all-encompassing, like the Virginity of her Son Jesus. Therefore, the Virgin Mary must have had a Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth, like her Son. Otherwise her Virginity would not be as perfect as it could be, as perfect as is her Son's Virginity. The Church has never taught and will never teach that the Virginity of the Mother of Jesus Christ is flawed in any way. The Church has always taught that the Virginity of Jesus and the Virginity of Mary are entirely perfect, complete, and flawless.

God desired that the Virginity of Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, be so perfect, complete, and all-encompassing that even the manner of her Immaculate Conception and her Holy Birth were required

by God to be entirely Virginal, occurring solely and entirely by a miracle of God, and not in the usual way. This teaching is trustworthy and true; it cannot be otherwise.

The conception and birth of the Virgin Mary and the conception and birth of Jesus Christ were each fully miraculous and fully virginal. Each occurred in a wholly pure and virginal manner, solely and entirely by a miracle of God. This teaching is one teaching. All Christians should know this true teaching without any doubt. May God give His special blessing to everyone who accepts this teaching without doubt.

“Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.’” (John 20:29).

“ ‘I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth’ ” (John 16:12-13).

“ ‘My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.’ ” (John 10:27-28).

Perfect Virgin

Perfect Virgin Mary,
your perfect virgin life
began with a miraculous virgin conception
and a miraculous virgin birth.
By virtue of your Divine Son Jesus Christ's perfect virginity,
of which your perfect virginity is but an imitation,
from which your perfect virginity proceeds,
grant chastity, modesty, and humility
to us, who trust in your perfect virginity,
and to the whole world.
Amen.

PRAISE BE TO GOD ALMIGHTY FOR ALL ETERNITY

Notes:

¹ The little prayer, “Jesus, Mary, I love you, save souls,” is found in the book *Jesus Appeals To The World*, about Sister Mary Consolata Betrone, a Capuchin nun (1903-1946), written by her spiritual director, Father Lorenzo Sales, I.M.C., (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1955).

² From the inscription on the miraculous medal. Our Lady showed the Medal to Saint Catherine Laboure on November 27, 1830, in the mother-house of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, in Paris. Catherine saw our Lady standing on a globe, with dazzling rays of light streaming from her outstretched hands. Framing the figure was an inscription: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.” Then Mary spoke to Catherine: “Have a medal struck upon this model. Those who wear it will receive great graces, especially if they wear it around the neck.” (The Association of the Miraculous Medal; <http://www.amm.org/medal.htm>).

³ Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 40-41.

⁴ This symbolism is mentioned by Pope Pius IX, in the Apostolic Constitution, *Ineffabilis Deus*, (Dec. 8, 1854), p. 13. This document makes reference to the Song of Solomon 4:4, with its symbolism of a tower, interpreted as referring to the Virgin Mary. This very same document infallibly defines the teaching of the Church about the Immaculate Conception.

⁵ Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, *The Life of Jesus Christ and Biblical Revelations*, (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1986), Vol. 1, p. 137-138.

⁶ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 39-40.

⁷ Cf. Emmerich, *The Life of Jesus Christ and Biblical Revelations*, Vol. 1, p. 135.

⁸ *Ineffabilis Deus*, p. 17.

⁹ *Ineffabilis Deus*, p. 17-18.

¹⁰ Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, Apostolic Constitution, (Nov. 1, 1950), p. 18, n. 40.

¹¹ *Ineffabilis Deus*, p. 17-18.

¹² The least in the kingdom of Heaven are greater than John, even though such persons are among those conceived and born in the usual way, because once one enters into Heaven, original sin and every effect of original sin is completely removed. John the Baptist had original sin, but the souls in Heaven have had their original sin and every effect of every kind of sin wiped clean.

¹³ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 57.

¹⁴ Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1983), p. 68.

¹⁵ Saint Bridget of Sweden, *Revelations of St. Bridget*, (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1984), p. 14.

¹⁶ Saint Bridget, *Revelations of St. Bridget*, p. 14-15.

¹⁷ Cf. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Mater*, (March 25, 1987), p. 5-6, n. 1: “In the liturgy the Church salutes Mary of Nazareth as the Church’s own beginning, for in the event of the Immaculate Conception the Church sees projected, and anticipated in her most noble member, the saving grace of Easter.”

¹⁸ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 29-30, 32. Joachim and Ann were separated for at least several months before the Immaculate Conception.

¹⁹ *Ineffabilis Deus*, p. 17.

²⁰ The Gospel of John refers to the Virgin Mary’s sister as “his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas” (John 19:25). Blessed Anne Catherine calls her “Maria,” “Maria Heli,” and also “Mary Heli,” and calls her husband “Cleophas.” Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 22-24, 74, 384.

²¹ A true virgin conception must necessarily be accomplished without sexual relations. This condition is necessary, but not sufficient. A true virgin conception must also meet other conditions, especially that the conception be accomplished solely by a miracle of God, and not by any means which could be duplicated by nature, science, or human intervention. A true virgin conception is **not** conception in the usual way accompanied or assisted by a miracle. A true virgin conception does **not** miraculously bring together a man’s seed and a woman’s egg, so that conception would proceed, from that point forward, in the usual way. But rather, a true virgin conception must occur solely and completely by a miracle from God. A true virgin conception is conception solely and entirely by means of a miracle—fully miraculous and fully virginal.

²² Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 29-30, 32.

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- ²³ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 41.
- ²⁴ For details on the timing of the Immaculate Conception and the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem, see my book, *Important Dates in the Lives of Jesus and Mary*. The Immaculate Conception occurred at the time of a holy feast celebrating the completion of the rebuilding of the Sanctuary of the Temple (the holiest part of the Temple, where only the priests were permitted to go). The 46 years is counted from the completion of the Sanctuary itself. The Sanctuary was completed 1½ years after the rebuilding began; but the rebuilding of the remainder of the Temple buildings took several more years to complete. And some work related to the Temple buildings also continued, even up to and beyond the time of Christ. Cf. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 15.420-423; 20.219.
- ²⁵ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 75. The burning bush of Moses is a biblical symbol of the Virgin Mary, just as Pope Pius IX teaches: *Ineffabilis Deus*, p. 13.
- ²⁶ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 77.
- ²⁷ *New Saint Joseph Sunday Missal and Hymnal*, (New York, NY: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974), Eucharistic Prayer I, In Communion with the Saints, p. 27.
- ²⁸ From the point of view of Heaven, in Eternity, the lives of Jesus and Mary are ever present-tense.
- ²⁹ Saint Bridget, *Revelations of St. Bridget*, p. 23.
- ³⁰ Saint Bridget, *Revelations of St. Bridget*, p. 23-24.
- ³¹ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 133.
- ³² Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 142.
- ³³ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 142-143.
- ³⁴ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 144.
- ³⁵ Saint Bridget, *Revelations of St. Bridget*, p. 19-20.
- ³⁶ Saint Bridget, *Revelations of St. Bridget*, p. 20.
- ³⁷ Saint Bridget, *Revelations of St. Bridget*, p. 28.
- ³⁸ Saint Bridget, *Revelations of St. Bridget*, p. 25-26.
- ³⁹ A true virgin birth must necessarily exclude any use of the birth canal whatsoever. This condition is necessary, but not sufficient. A true virgin birth must also meet other conditions, especially that the birth be accomplished solely by a miracle of God, and not by means of nature, science, or human intervention. A true virgin birth is **not** birth in the usual way accompanied or assisted by a miracle. But rather, a true virgin birth must occur solely and completely by a miracle from God. A true virgin birth is birth solely and entirely by means of a miracle—fully miraculous and fully virginal.
- ⁴⁰ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 191.
- ⁴¹ Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p. 193.
- ⁴² *New Saint Joseph Sunday Missal and Hymnal*, Eucharistic Prayer I, Communicantes for Christmas, p. 68.