

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

December 8

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Saturday, December 8, is a Holy Day of Obligation. Mass will be celebrated at 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and noon. The vigil Mass will be celebrated at 6 p.m. on Friday, December 7.

In 1854, Pope Pius IX declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, stating that from “the first instance of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, ... was preserved exempt from the stain of original sin.” With that declaration in *Ineffabilis Deus*, Pius clarified the Church’s long-held belief.

The Pope expressed precisely and clearly that this exemption from original sin was a gift and privilege given by God for having chosen Mary to be the Mother of the Savior. Thus, she received the benefits of salvation in Christ from the very moment of her conception, the same benefits that humanity would receive with the Incarnation of Christ and His sacrifice on the Cross.

This great gift to Mary, an otherwise ordinary human being, is a great sign of hope for us and a reminder of the love of God for us. It also reminds us that Mary’s purity and holiness continues to be a model for all Christians.