

Immaculate Conception

My beloved brothers and sisters, every First Saturday of each month, I am privileged to celebrate the Carmelite Rite for the Lay Community of Mt. Carmel. The gospel is the Gospel of St. John, in which Mary and St. John remain at the foot of the cross and hear Jesus say His last words: "Mother, behold your son. Son, behold your mother. And from that day forward, he brought her into his own home." What many fail to realize, is that this event is the completion of the Divine Promise that was made to Adam and Eve after their sin in the Garden. In its completion, the declaration of Jesus, is that Mary is the New Eve, the Mother of all of the saved.

This unique call to Mary began in that event which we call the Immaculate Conception. It means that by the Grace of the Son she was to bare, she was preserved from the first moment of her conception in her mother's womb, from the disease of Original Sin. She is the work of God, the bride of the Holy Spirit, whose entire work is to bring forth the Son of God and our Salvation. In her mysterious and wonderful creation, God has undone the terrible work of Satan, and continues to do so. God promised that He would crush the head of Satan, and in Her, He continues to do so!

At the foot of the cross, Jesus does something even more wonderful, in making her the mother of all of the saved, Jesus makes her portal of Grace of the Salvation won by Jesus Christ. She is the channel of Grace, that bares the children of God to the Father, through Her Son Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. She is the one whom God has chosen to continually crush the head of Satan, and to snatch us from its poisonous grasp! The Gospel of Luke calls her: Kekaretemenousou; the Greek word that means: "fully Grace One". There is no sin in her, because she is "overshadowed by the Holy Spirit of God..." Indeed, she is the bride of the Holy Spirit, who conceives in her, the Son of God, the Word Made Flesh. This is God's work, because God is always faithful to His promises!

In just a few days, we will celebrate God's gift to the Americas in Our Lady of Guadalupe. It is no accident that God chose that she would appear to Juan Diego on the 12th of December, just after we celebrate Her as the Immaculata! In Her

image, we see another promise of God fulfilled: in Rev. 12, she is the “Woman clothed with the sun, with a crown of stars and the moon beneath her feet.” She has depicted herself in this miraculous Icon, as “about ready to give birth”, which Revelations tells us, shall rule the nations with an iron rod...”. There is no one closer to God than she. She has the power to bring us into a constant relationship with her Son Jesus, and when we place ourselves in her motherly heart, she brings us to live in the heart of her Son, Jesus. The foremost way of doing this, is by praying her beloved prayer, the Holy Rosary- it is the fastest and surest way of growing in Holiness. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners who have recourse to thee!