

# Second Sunday in Advent

The Immaculate Conception, 1627, Artist: Guido Reni Italian. Met Museum Collection.



## Prayer from St. John Paul II

### Immaculate Virgin!

Your spotless spiritual beauty  
is for us a living source of  
confidence and hope.  
To have you as Mother, Holy Virgin,  
reassures us on the path of life  
as a pledge of eternal salvation.  
Because of this, O Mary,  
we have recourse to you  
with confidence.  
Help us to build a world  
where human life is always  
cherished and defended,  
every form of violence banished,  
the peace of all tenaciously sought.

## The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

*While traditionally recognized on December 8, this year the Church recognizes the feast on Monday, Dec. 9. The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a holy day of obligation.*

**An essential part** of God's plan for the mother of his Son was that she be conceived free from Original Sin. "Through the centuries the Church became ever more aware that Mary, 'full of grace' through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception" (CCC, no. 491).

**In anticipation that she** was to bear the Son of God, Mary was preserved from the time of her conception from Original Sin. We call this the Immaculate Conception. No sin would touch her, so that she would be a fitting and worthy vessel of the Son of God. The Immaculate Conception does not refer to the virginal conception and birth of Christ, but rather to Mary's being conceived without inheriting Original Sin. In the course of time, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception became more precisely enunciated, as its truth— long supported by the universal popular devotion of the faithful—was better understood by deepening theological inquiry.

**In 1854, Pope Pius IX** proclaimed this dogma infallibly: that is, in his role as supreme teacher of the Church, he declared that this doctrine is divinely revealed and must be accepted with faith by the entire Church.