

Immaculate Conception 12/08/2014

Our readings for this feast speak to us of the temptation that we have to live as though we are **autonomous** and the ways in which God relates to us as **partners**. Both ways of life are available to us. The desire to live as though we are **autonomous** is found in our first reading from **Genesis**. The willingness to relate with God as **partner** comes to us in our gospel story from **Luke**.

The **Genesis** story reveals just how easy it is for us to slip into an **unconscious** way of life. It is a way of life in which our primary concern is ourselves: how we look; what is most convenient; how we will gain. We can't **consciously** live this way, so like Adam and Eve, we allow ourselves to be convinced that if we live **unconsciously** we can achieve our goal: **to be like God** and therefore **self-sufficient**. The only problem is: **God isn't self-sufficient; God is relational**.

Our gospel story from Luke tells about the interaction that God has with Mary. It is difficult for her to remain **conscious**. She struggles and keeps demurring. God, however, gently persists. Finally, Mary becomes willing to allow God to be God and relate with her; and allows herself to be who she is: **God's partner**.

God comes to each of us, and gently encourages us to be willing to accept who we are too: **God's partners**. Each time we are not willing to be God's partner we **unconsciously** assert ourselves as **autonomous** and non-

**relational**, and **sin enters the world**. Each time, however, we are drawn into **consciousness** by our willingness to be embraced by God as God's partner, God flows through us, and love heals our world's wounds.

TODAY'S READINGS TELL US SOME OF THE BASIC TRUTHS ABOUT OURSELVES AS HUMAN BEINGS AND BELIEVERS.

THE 1ST READING & GOSPEL REMIND US THAT TO BE HUMAN MEANS THAT OUR HEARTS ARE OFTEN AS ATTRACTED TO SIN AS THEY ARE TO HOLINESS.

TO BE HUMAN MEANS THAT AT TIMES WE CAN BE ATTRACTED TO THE VOICE OF GOD AND TO THE VOICE OF THE SERPENT.

WITHIN ALL OF US THERE IS THIS DUAL TENDENCY TO DO GOOD AS WELL AS TO DO EVIL; THIS ABILITY TO LIVE IN THE LIGHT OF LOVE, AND IN LIVE IN THE SHADOW OF SIN.

SIN IN THIS UNDERSTANDING IS NOT SO MUCH THE BREAKING OF CERTAIN LAWS OR COMMANDMENTS, AS IT IS GIVING IN TO THAT INNER INCLINATION TO ORGANIZE EVERYTHING AROUND OURSELVES, OUR COMFORT, AND OUR WAY OF LIFE.

BUT TODAY, THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH HOLDS UP BEFORE US 2 SHINING BEACONS OF HOPE WHO NEVER HAD TO WRESTLE WITH THESE ISSUES. CHRIST OUR SAVIOR, AND MARY OF NAZARETH, HIS BLESSED MOTHER.

IN CELEBRATING HER IMMAC. CON. WE THANK GOD  
THAT SHE WAS PROTECTED FROM THE GRIP OF  
ORIGINAL SIN, IN ORDER TO BECOME THE MOTHER  
OF OUR REDEEMER.

AS THE MOTHER OF OUR SAVIOR, MARY TEACHES US  
SOME SIMPLE SPIRITUAL LESSONS.  
LIKE ANY GOOD MOTHER SHE CAN HELP US WITH  
OUR A-B-C'S. ( ABANDON / BELIEVE / CLING )

SHE CAN TEACH US HOW TO ABANDON OUR FEARS  
AND OUR SELFISHNESS.

SHE CAN TEACH US HOW TO BELIEVE THAT GOD'S  
LOVE IS ALWAYS READY TO HEAL & FORGIVE.

SHE CAN TEACH US HOW TO CLING TO CHRIST  
ALONE AS OUR REDEEMER.

AND SO ON THIS FEAST OF MARY'S "I.C."  
WE KEEP OUR EYES FIXED ON JESUS  
& REMEMBER THAT  
NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD.