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The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, as lead by the Bishop of Rome, successor to Peter, the first Pope, has always venerated the Blessed Virgin Mary including her sinlessness; for The Church follows Scripture - especially the New Testament which She, Herself, compiled - as perfectly as She follows Her Tradition -

For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Luke 1:48.

To Mary, The ***Woman*** of Scripture and ***Mother .. of the men who keep God's commandments and hold fast to the truth concerning Jesus.*** Rev. 12:17., The Church applies the beautiful words of Wisdom 7:26:-

***she, the glow that radiates from eternal light;
she, the untarnished mirror of God's majesty;
she, the faithful image of His goodness.***

Because Mary is ***full of grace (kecharitomene)*** Luke 1:28., The Church, through Pope Pius IX in his ***Ineffabilis Deus***, an Apostolic Constitution issued on December 8, 1854, confirmed the tradition that held Mary as being conceived immaculate.

Mary has become known as The Immaculate Conception as a result of her apparitions at Lourdes in 1858, which is taken as a heavenly confirmation of Pius IX's Apostolic Constitution.

It was at Lourdes that Mary named herself ***The Immaculate Conception.***

The Immaculate Heart

The Catholic Encyclopaedia, book 6 page 965, makes it clear that 'heart' in the biblical sense, can have a

variety of meanings but usually directs the reader to the ***inner person*** or to the ***invisible inner man.***

Therefore when The Catholic Church, through Her Vicars - the Popes - and the Bishops united to them, consecrate the world to The Immaculate Heart, they are consecrating the world to the ***inner person*** that is Mary. Such consecrations are exceptionally important as witnessed by the fact that virtually every Pope for a 100 years has consecrated the world to The Immaculate Heart.

This exceptional importance is further confirmed by Mary herself when

she appeared to the three children - Lucia, Jacinta, Francisco - at Fatima, Portugal, in 1917. She proclaimed:

***You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go.
To save them,
God wishes to establish in the world
devotion to my Immaculate Heart.***

What an astonishing statement! Mary is saying - and The Church has approved the Fatima apparitions -

**that the *sinners* of the world
will be saved through *devotion* to
her *Immaculate Heart*!!**

Mary further proclaims at Fatima 'Russia will convert' and

'In the end, my [Immaculate] Heart will triumph'!

Another astonishing statement! Mary clearly states that she will triumph over the evils that are invading the world!

While The Church is fully aware that it is God Who will triumph, through Jesus Christ, over all evils, Mary states the truth that God always works through His Children in His triumph over evil. Thus Mary, God's most perfect and precious child of all creation, truly confirms that she, through the Infinite Merits of Jesus Christ, will triumph over evil.

Indeed, she is saying that she, **with her children**, will triumph over evil, for this is the very reason why God calls for His children to develop and to promote devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

That is to say, that

**the world will be saved by Mary's children,
those who are devoted to her Immaculate Heart.**

When we speak of Mary's children, we recall that her children comprise the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, The Church.

But Fatima gives us even more astonishing data, for at the final apparition on the 13th. October the incredible miracle of the sun occurred, witnessed by tens of thousands of people, Catholics, non-Catholics and anti-Catholics - some report over 80,000 witnesses!

This stupendous miracle can not but remind anyone who reads Scripture, of Chapter 12:1 of Revelation :- ***And now, in heaven, a***

great portent appeared; a woman that wore the sun for her mantle, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars about her head.

This is an obvious connection which Pope Paul IV confirmed when he wrote his encyclical:-

The Great Sign.

We find therefore that author Rev. Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm., S.T.D. in his *Must Catholics Believe in Fatima?* published in Our Lady's Digest, Fall 1990, Pages 35-43, reports:-

With respect to Fatima, we may note the papal visit of Paul VI in 1967, the fiftieth anniversary, as also the publication on that occasion of one of his major Marian letters, Signum magnum (Latin words for 'the great sign', title taken from the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse,

(Revelation) 'the great sign that appeared in the sky, the woman clothed with the sun.')

Here we perceive that at Fatima, The Woman of Scripture, Mary, provided very clear messages that she, (The Immaculate Conception), and *her children*, (The Church), would triumph over *the red dragon* of Revelation 12 and that her *children* would be those who delighted in giving devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

The Woman of Scripture

It is no surprise that *The Woman* would triumph over *the red dragon* for Scripture says so at the very beginning. Refer Genesis 3:15 which states:

***And I will establish a feud between thee and the woman,
between thy offspring and hers;
she is to crush thy head,
while thou dost lie in ambush
at her heels.***

Here again we are brought face to face with *the woman* - mentioned in Scripture at historical moments of world events

* declaring her triumph **from the start**, in Genesis;

* noting her majesty and Queenship, as of a conqueror, **at the end**, in the conflict against evil, in Apocalypse;

that is to say, at the beginning of Scripture and at its end!

But yet again do we observe *the woman* of Scripture **at the beginning**

and at the end of Christ's work on earth!

In Cana of Galilee, Jesus began his miracles and made known the glory that was his. John 2:11. This all-important start of his Ministry of Salvation resulted because of *the woman* who asked Him to work the miracle of changing water into wine.

Jesus answered

Nay, woman,

why dost thou trouble me with that?

My time has not yet come. John 2:4.

At the end of His earthly Ministry Jesus, from The Cross, when each word from His dying lips came only with super-human effort, again deliberately highlighted *the woman* of Scripture:

Woman, this is thy son.

... This is thy mother. John 19:26.

This woman, this person, is The Immaculate Conception; The Immaculate Heart.

Islam and The Immaculate Conception

The famous Bishop, Fulten J. Sheen, in his article *Mary And The Moslems* found in the Mindszenty Report Pages: 1 - 3 - Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation - considers this exceptionally important matter which affects the whole world. The good Bishop states the following:-

↳ The Koran, which is the Bible of the Moslems, has many passages concerning the Blessed Virgin.

First of all, the Koran believes in her Immaculate Conception, and also, in her Virgin Birth.

The third chapter of the Koran places the history of Mary's family in a genealogy, which goes back through Abraham, Noah, and Adam. When one compares the Koran's description of the birth of Mary with the apocryphal Gospel of the birth of Mary, one is tempted to believe that Mohamed very much depended upon the latter. Both books describe the old age and the definite sterility of the mother of Mary. When, however, she conceives, the mother of Mary is made to say in the Koran; "O Lord, I vow and consecrate to you what is already within me. Accept it from me."

When Mary is born, the mother says: "And I consecrate her with all of her posterity under thy protection, O Lord, against Satan!"

The Koran passes over Joseph in the life of Mary, but the Moslem

tradition know his name and has some familiarity with him. In this tradition, Joseph is made to speak to Mary, who is a virgin. As he inquired how she conceived Jesus without a father, Mary answered: "Do you not know that God, when He created the wheat had no need of seed, and that God by His power made the trees grow without the help of rain? All that God had to do was to say, 'So be it, and it was done.'" The Koran has also verses on the Annunciation, Visitation, and Nativity. Angels are pictured as accompanying the Blessed Mother and saying: "Oh, Mary, God has chosen you and purified you, and elected you above all the women of the earth." In the nineteenth chapter of the Koran there are 41 verses on Jesus and Mary.

There is such a strong defence of the virginity of Mary here that the Koran, in the fourth book, attributed the condemnation of the Jews to their monstrous calumny against the Virgin Mary. ↗

These words are supportive of other writers who have studied the Koran with regard to Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ.

Mary has a Multitude of Children.

We find, then, that

**the two largest religions in the world
believe in fervent devotion to Mary
and hold her virtues in the very highest esteem.**

The Muslims and the Catholics comprise some 2 billion people in the world! Then there are the Orthodox Christians who also have great devotion to Mary. It is true too, that there is a large number of Protestants who hold Mary in great favour.

In fact, any sincere, fair-minded person can not do other than consider Mary to be a heroine - consider, for example, her courage in accompanying Jesus to Calvary and remaining with Him beneath The Cross!

The whole idea of devotion to Mary is pure common sense. The great Mother Teresa made this point when she summed up the matter in simple and forthright words;

No Mary; no Jesus!

Mother Teresa says so, because everything that Jesus Christ brought into the world, came through His Mother and by way of her co-operation with God. ***Behold the handmaid of The Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word.*** Luke 1:38.

The World Desperately Needs The Immaculate Conception.

The whole world knows that God holds creation in existence from one moment to the next; that only through God and His Messiah is salvation to be found.

The whole Christian world knows that Jesus Christ is God; that He is Man.

And also, the whole world knows that God delegates His power and authority, but also the responsibility that goes with these, to mankind. Hence, every man and woman and child, has freewill and the divine ability to recognise, acknowledge and appreciate.

To Mary - The Immaculate Heart, The Immaculate Conception, The Woman - God confirmed that He has delegated the greatest power, authority and responsibility upon her when the great Archangel asked her to become the Mother of Jesus and so, to support Him in His Work on earth; to share this Work with Him.

The astonishing magnitude of Mary's authority before God and before mankind, is depicted in Revelation 12, where she is shown to be *The*

Woman clothed with the sun, a glorious sign the like of which is found nowhere else! for no-one else!

Over the centuries The Universal Church has heaped great praise upon the Holy Virgin. Saints and Popes have been elegant in their unlimited devotion to her. Fathers of The Church and renown theologians have been likewise affected by Mary's humility, beauty, courage, obedience and perfect sinlessness.

There seems to no honour that has not been given to Mary, Mother of God and Queen of Heaven.

Yet, it seems to me, that mankind has yet to realise the enormous statue that God has laid upon His Immaculate Conception. For, if Mary is The Immaculate Conception, then that means she is the perfection reflection of The Heavenly-father Who is Eternal-goodness.

This reflection is borne out by the fact that Jesus is the direct Son of Mary in creation and the direct Son of the Heavenly-father in Eternity. Mary is the supreme pinnacle of The Heavenly-father's Work in creation.

That being so, Mary is to be compared with The Universal Church, the Bridegroom of the Saviour, Which is the pinnacle of The Eternal-son's Work in creation.

Just as the world desperately needs The Universal Church, equally so, does the world need The Immaculate Conception.

The New Era of The Eternal-spirit.

From these facts, we are able to extrapolate some other facts

concerning the world's entry into the Era of The Spirit.

If Mary is the resultant Work of The Eternal-father and The Church is the resultant Work of The Eternal-son, then the resultant Work of The Eternal-spirit **must issue from them both**:- from The Immaculate Conception and from The Church.

This is so, because this procedure follows the process of The Godhead, where The Spirit issues from both The Father and The Son.

The process of The Godhead has already been paralleled in creation, in so far as the Work of The Son issues from the Work of The Father, i.e. The Church issues from The Immaculate Conception: where in Eternity, The Son issues from The Father.

Therefore for the glory of the Virgin Mary and for our own consolation, we proclaim the Most Blessed Mary

MOTHER OF THE CHURCH,

that is to say, of all the people of God, of the faithful as well as of the pastors, who call her the most loving Mother. And we wish that the Mother of God should be still more honoured and invoked by the whole of Christendom through this most sweet title.

This is a title, venerable brothers, not new to Christian piety; it is precisely by this title, in preference to all others, that the faithful and the Church addresses Mary. It truly is part of the genuine substance of devotion to Mary, finding its justification in the very dignity of the Mother of the Word Incarnate.

(Pope Paul VI, before Vatican Two, at the promulgation of the constitution containing the chapter dedicated to Mary.)

This concept - of The Church issuing from The Immaculate Conception - is logical because the world needs to recognise, acknowledge and appreciate both the Work of The Father and the Work of The Son, not only because Their Works so demand and deserve, but also to enable the world to enter the era of The Spirit with a more perfect spirit.

It is also logical, in that appreciation of The Immaculate Conception automatically points to appreciation of The Universal Church which alone provides the fullness of the truth concerning this wondrous Work of God.

Recognition of The Immaculate Conception by the world will also tend to bring a closer relationship between the great Christian denominations, Catholic and Orthodox, as well as between Christianity and Islam.

Wearing Our Own image.

And God said, Let us make man, wearing our own image and likeness So God made man in his own image, made him in the image of God. Gen. 1:26,27.

As *God made man in His Own image*, it is no surprise that Mary too was made in His image. However, as Mary was given that great Gift from God, her Immaculate Conception, which she kept absolutely intact, it is not surprising at all, that her image of The Creator is so wonderfully perfect, far above all other men and women born in original sin.

Clearer and clearer, does the command of Scripture become most urgent for this generation, renown in history for its artificial contraception mentality, and the manifold evils that stem from this.

All generations shall call me blessed. Luke 1:48.

It must become the ambition for all members of The Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, to promote to every man, woman and child on the planet recognition, acknowledgment and appreciation of The Immaculate Conception, calling her *blessed* in this wonderful way.

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