

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – December 8, 2017 – Reflection

Anyone who has ever engaged a contractor to do work on home or property knows that they want to be paid up front even before they lay a brick or hammer a nail.

If you have shopped for that special gift on-line on Cyber Monday, you know that such concepts as “cash-on-delivery” have gone the way of the rotary phone or the carrier pigeon. When you fill your cart and go to cash out at Amazon, they want you to pay right then with your major credit card ... they don't let you wait until FedEx delivers your package of wrong-sized merchandise to your front porch.

All of us share in the Original Sin of Adam and Eve, even though we didn't actually do anything wrong back then. But, because we are part of the human race and their ancestors, we share in their tendency to choose my way, not God's Way; in their inclination to choose sin rather than virtue.

Today we celebrate a great gift from God to one tiny, unborn little girl. From the first moment of her conception in St. Ann's womb, this child received an advance payment of the grace Christ would win for the whole human race as He redeemed us from sin by the Blood of His Cross. This child, who would be named Mary, would one day be asked a question by the angel, “Would you, O highly favored daughter, consent to be the Mother of God's Son?” Her answer would not be forced or

coerced or pre-ordained, but the ground of her soul would be clean and clear from the stain of Original Sin and ready to receive the Incarnate One should she say "Yes".

Why should this grace in one human being's life, this favor extended to one girl-child so long ago, be cause for celebration for us? It's because what was gifted to her before Christ ever paid the price of our redemption on the Cross, was the "first fruits" for us. God graces Mary to show us the glorious destiny that awaits us all - if, like her, we can say, "Be it done unto me according to your word."

For all who believe, for all people of good will, God has done this great thing for us, done this great work in us, rebuilt in us what had been torn down, sent us this marvelous gift of salvation ... for free, at no cost to us, returnable if we're not completely satisfied ... the bill's been paid by His Son on Calvary.

That kinda business model would never fly in today's cyber world!