

ON MARY IMMACULATE

By: PADRE PIO

O uncreated Love, Spirit of light and truth, make your way into my poor mind and enable me to penetrate --- as far as this is possible to a poor creature like me --- into the abyss of grace and purity and holiness, so as to acquire a continual increase of love for that God who from all eternity conceived in his divine mind this masterpiece, unequalled by any other creative work of his hands: Mary Immaculate!

From all eternity God contemplated the most perfect work that was to issue from his hands and anticipated this marvelous product by the copious outpouring of his grace. The first of his creatures fell by disobeying him. The mark of original sin remained engraved on his forehead and was reproduced in his descendants who are to bear the consequences until the end of time. A woman brought about disaster and another woman was to bring salvation. The first woman, tempted by the serpent, imprinted the mark of sin on mankind. The other woman was to rise up pure and immaculate by grace to crush the serpent's head. The serpent is powerless against her, precisely because she was conceived without original sin, and in vain will he lie in wait for her. Through her mankind received grace.

Preserved by grace, through the One who was to be the Savior of fallen mankind, no slightest stain of sin was ever to touch her. She came forth pure from the mind of God and is to shine as the Morning Star on all of us who are to fix our gaze on her. She is to be our sure guide who directs our steps towards Jesus, the divine Sun who lights her up with divine splendor and points to her as our model of purity and holiness. Nothing is above her in all creation, but all is subjected to her by the grace of the One who created her Immaculate, who prepared her to bear him in her womb. At the moment of her conception she shines as a ray of utter purity.

She is adorned by grace from the moment of her conception and hence she grows in grace and beauty. After God she is, through grace, the most perfect, higher than the Angels in her purity. God takes pleasure in her because she is the one who resembles him most closely, the only worthy repository of the divine secrets. According to nature she precedes Jesus, the divine Sun, while according to grace Jesus, the divine Sun, precedes her, the most pure, who from the divine Sun receives all purity, all light and beauty. All is dark and obscure in comparison to this most pure light who is to renew creation through the One she is to bear in her womb, as the dewdrop in the heart of a rose.

It all begins with her Immaculate Conception. By this unique and singular gift she receives divine grace in superabundance and by her correspondence with it she becomes worthy to receive greater graces.

Mother Most Pure, my wretched soul filled with misery and sin appeals to your maternal Heart, that in your goodness you may be pleased to pour out on me at least a little of that grace which was poured out on you unrestrictedly, in all abundance and fullness, by the Heart of God. Accompanied by this grace may I succeed in serving and loving less

imperfectly the God who occupied your heart so completely and made your body his temple from the first moment of your Immaculate Conception.

The Three Divine Persons emulate each other in pouring out on this sublime creature all privileges and favors, all grace and holiness.

The Eternal Father created her pure and immaculate and looks upon her with pleasure as the worthy dwelling place of his Only Begotten Son. By the generation of the Son in his own bosom from all eternity, he anticipated the generation of the Son in the most pure womb of this Mother. He clothed her from the very first moment of her conception with the shining snow-white garment of grace and of the most perfect holiness. He caused her to share in his own perfections.

The Son, who chose her as his Mother lavished his wisdom on her. From the very beginning, by infused knowledge, she knew her God and loved and served him in the most perfect manner, in a manner in which he had never before been loved and served on earth.

The Holy Spirit poured out his love upon her, the only one capable and worthy of receiving it to what I should call an unlimited degree, for she was the only one who could approach God with the purity of a dove and thus, at close quarters, as it were, know and love him. She was the only one capable of containing within her the influx of a love that filled her from above. She alone was worthy to return that love to the One who filled her with it. This love prepared her for her *Fiat*, the assent which saved the world from the tyranny of the infernal enemy and was to overshadow her and make her the most pure and fecund dove of a Son who was God.

O my Mother! How confused I feel, loaded down as I am with sins, in your presence, all pure, Immaculate from the first moment of your conception, or rather from all eternity as you were conceived in the mind of God. Have pity on me. May one motherly glance from you lift me up, purify me, raise me up to God from the mire of this earth, to reach the One who created me and regenerated me in holy baptism, restoring to me that spotless white stole of innocence which had been sullied by original sin. May I love you, O my Mother! Pour into my heart that love which burned in your heart for him, pour it into me who, though steeped in misery, admire in you the mystery of your Immaculate Conception. I ardently yearn that through this Immaculate Conception you may render me pure of heart, so that I may love my God and yours, pure in mind so that I may reach up to him, to contemplate, adore and serve him in spirit and in truth, pure in body so that I may be a tabernacle less unworthy to possess him when he deigns to come to me in Holy Communion. Amen.

May we too, regenerated in holy Baptism, correspond to the grace of our vocation in imitation of our Immaculate Mother, and may we strive to apply our minds constantly to divine things, in order to know, serve and love God more perfectly.