

December 15

**FOR THE DAY OF THE OCTAVE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN**

83.1 First Point

If we wish to share in the spirit of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin and to draw from it the good that God asks of us by a holy participation, let us note that this divine mother at the moment when her soul was created resembled a beautiful star enlightened by the light of grace and endowed with reason. What mortification this must have been for this excellent creature to see herself thus captive, shut up as though in a prison for nine months and deprived of the use of her senses and her members! What a source of humiliation for her in her knowledge of so great a degradation!

Let us imitate these admirable dispositions of the most immaculate Virgin. Let us love and willingly cultivate seclusion, silence, and recollection. Let us apply ourselves to control our senses, mortifying our members which are on the earth,¹⁰²² as Saint Paul says. Let us, so to speak, make ourselves captives for the love of God through exact obedience and by a great fidelity to our Rules. This voluntary and loving submission will make us truly free with the noble and glorious liberty of God's children.¹⁰²³ O, agreeable and lovable subjection, exclaims the Author of the Imitation, by which we become truly free and holy! O sacred state of religious subjection which makes one equal to the angels, pleasing to God, frightening to the demons, and commendable to all the faithful! O service worthy to be embraced and constantly desired, by which one acquires the sovereign good and a joy that knows no end!

83.2 Second Point

In her Immaculate Conception the Most Blessed Virgin enjoyed from the first moment the practice of the virtues, at least those that are interior. She knew God by infused faith; she loved him by the charity of the Holy Spirit, who filled her from the first moments of her existence; she praised, blessed, thanked, and glorified God by her spiritual and interior acts more excellently than did all the angels together.

This is what we must learn to imitate; this is what is called the science of the saints.¹⁰²⁴ We must learn the knowledge of God in interior prayer and by reading good spiritual books and catechisms. We must strive to set our hearts on fire with the love of God by fervently and frequently raising our hearts in what are called ejaculatory prayers. We must strive to make ourselves agreeable in the eyes of his divine majesty by continual acts of thanksgiving, of love, and of praise, as well as by the practice of the most solid virtues, especially humility, patience, and obedience, which were so dear and so familiar to the most holy Mother of God.

83.3 Third Point

The Most Blessed Virgin, although enclosed in the womb of Saint Ann, was prepared by the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's great designs on her. And the Most Blessed Virgin prepared herself by her faithful correspondence, making holy use through her interior acts of the gifts and graces that heaven abundantly gave her.

The holy religious state, to which God has had the goodness to call us, is our mother; the novitiate is her womb in which she spiritually conceives the novices who are her children; she engenders them for Jesus Christ,¹⁰²⁵ as Saint Paul expresses it, by forming them to a truly Christian and religious way of life.

You, therefore, who have the happiness of enjoying this advantage in the novitiate, this mystical and life-giving womb of the religious life, should see to it that your spiritual conception be immaculate, that is, spotless, through exemption from all deliberate sin. Develop good habits in yourselves conformable to the maxims of the holy Gospel. Fill yourself with the graces of the Holy Spirit.

The Most Blessed Virgin, nine months after her most pure conception, came forth from the womb of Saint Ann full of grace and the Spirit of God,¹⁰²⁶ ready to do great things, namely, to procure the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Prepare yourselves also in the same way to leave the novitiate filled with grace and the Spirit of God, so that you may labor solely for his glory by procuring the salvation of souls according to the spirit and the end of our Institute, or by carrying out other work and assignments in the house according to the designs of divine Providence for you. You will know these assignments infallibly through the voice of holy obedience, and in them you will most certainly find your sanctification, your interior peace, and your salvation. Beg the Most Blessed Virgin to obtain this grace for you through her merits and in virtue of her holy and Immaculate Conception.

* The six meditations (103,184,168,181,83 and 188) appear, with the short biographies of Saint Yon and Saint Cassian, at the end of CL 12 (and the original Edition of the Meditations). It seems quite clear from the vocabulary and style that they were not written by De La Salle (See CL 47, pp. 539-540). The numbers of the Meditations are those of the 1882 Edition.

1022 Col 3:5
1023 Rom 8:21
1024 Wis 10:10
1025 1 Cor 4:15
1026 Lk 1:28