



THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

Murillo

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THE NATIVITY AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Nearly two thousand years ago Jesus Christ, the Saviour, was born in Bethlehem. One hundred years ago Pope Pius IX, in the Bull "Ineffabilis Deus," declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The Christmas Season is at hand and our joy shall continue throughout the coming year, for Pope Pius XII, in his Encyclical "Fulgens Corona," has declared 1954 a Marian Year.

These mysteries of the Catholic Faith, the Nativity of Our Lord and the Immaculate Conception of His Holy Mother, are closely related to each other. In order to procure our salvation, God the Father gave to the human race the incomparable gift of His Divine Son. But, for the Perfect Man, God could do nothing less than provide the perfect mother. By His Almighty Power, Mary was conceived immaculate; a fit vessel for God's Son; a vessel of honor.

On that day in Nazareth, when the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, a new and unique chapter was added to the world's history. Mary's "Fiat" joined with the will of Christ and for the first and only time a mother willed her Child, and the Child chose His mother. Man was given not only the Promised Redeemer, but was also awarded an intercessor before the throne of God.

Mary, the most perfect of creatures, because she is human, is an inspiration to all of us. Through the grace of God she is free from sin, and her intercession enables us to conquer sin. In the stable at Bethlehem the sweetness of motherhood and the beauty of virginity were combined in the person of Mary. We are drawn from the ugliness of the world by the beauty of the Virgin, and we are protected from the attacks of the devil by the sweetness of the Mother.

During the coming Marian Year we place Dominicana under the guidance and protection of Mary. May her shining beauty illumine our efforts; her submission and purity refine our motives; and her glory crown our work.