

2020 Advent Reflection

December 8, 2020

Reflection by Sister Kathleen Bierne

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Today we celebrate the feast that says that Mary, from her conception, was free of the human tendency to use the gift of free will selfishly. Unlike us, her freedom of choice was always used to further the good, to bring about God's will for the world. Nevertheless, we know from Luke's Gospel account of the Incarnation, Mary did not always know the details ahead of time as to what that "yes" she voiced would mean. Just as we struggle with our own daily choices, Mary was troubled by the words of the Angel messenger. She asked questions, she pondered, she discerned and ultimately she trusted in the unknown, just as we often must do. The liturgy for today's feast states in the collect: "as you preserved her from every stain by virtue of the Death of your Son, which you foresaw, so, through her intercession we, too, may be cleansed and admitted to your presence." We believe and profess today that it was by means of the prevenient grace of God that Mary was untouched by any stain of sin. Today, in this second week of Advent, in a church, a nation and a world in turmoil from the pandemic and from inner and outer chaos, we ask Mary's help to discern, to say "yes" in our own moments of facing an unknown future. We ask Mary to help us trust as we voice our own **"Behold, the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your Word."**