

Traditions & Customs in Spain

8th December - The Immaculate Conception

By LL

As you may know, the 8th of December is a bank holiday in Spain it is the day of the Immaculate Conception.

Now I always thought that the Immaculate Conception took place on that date, but looking around on the internet I realised that I was mistaken. I found a Spanish web site called www.churchforum.org and this is what they say:

Immaculate Conception means 'Conceived without the stain of Original Sin'

On 8th December, 1854, the Supreme Pontiff, Pío IX, received petitions from all the bishops and Catholic universities in the whole world to call a meeting in the world's biggest and most beautiful church, the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome, of more than 200 prelates, cardinals, arch bishops, bishops, ambassadors and thousands and thousands of faithful Catholics. In the middle of the general excitement he solemnly declared, 'We declare that the doctrine which says that Mary was conceived without original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and that everybody must believe this as the dogma of our Faith'.



At that moment the bells of Rome's 300 towers started chiming. Carrier pigeons were sent out to the whole world with the great news, and all the world's 400,000 Catholic temples held celebrations in honour of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary.

Some nuns asked the great Pontiff Pío IX, 'Holy Father, what did your holiness feel in the moment you declared the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception? Because we saw the transformation in you and how your face lit up'.

And the Sacred Pontiff answered, 'The moment when I declared that the doctrine which teaches that Virgin Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin is a dogma of our Faith, I felt the immeasurable purity of Virgin Mary with a strength and clarity beyond description; my soul was filled with a joy unknown until that moment. Put together all the great joys of your lives: Your First Communion, the day you took the veil, the day of Vocation, Silver Weddings etc. etc., and you will have a small idea of what I felt in my soul on that memorable day'.

So this tells us when the Immaculate Conception actually became a dogma. But who proved the point in the first place? The same website also tells us the story behind this:

Many centuries ago there was a great gathering of Wise Men, and the most famous doctor of the time, Dun Scotto, proved that Mary really is immaculate, i.e. unstained by original sin.

He proved it with this famous argument:

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1st 'Would it be suitable that His Mother were born without the stain of original sin?' Everybody answered, 'Yes, it would be suitable that His Mother were born without any stain. This is the most honorable for Him.'

2nd 'Would God be able to make it that His Mother were born without the stain of original sin?' Everybody answered, 'Yes, God is able to do anything, and thus he could make it that His Mother were born without any stain: Immaculate'.

3rd 'Does God make that which is suitable for him happen? Or does he not make it happen?' Everybody answered, 'That which is suitable for God to do, that which God sees that it is good to do, he does'.

So Scotto said,

1st. For God it is better that his Mother were Immaculate, i.e. without the stain of original sin.

2nd. God was able to make it that his Mother was born Immaculate: Without stain.

3rd. Thus: God made it that Mary were born without the stain of original sin. Because when God knows that something is good he makes it happen'.

Everybody applauded and accepted the truth.

It is said that this argument and proof occurred to Scotto when he passed by a statue of the Virgin and said, 'Oh, Sacred Virgin give me the proper words to be able to speak well of you'.

You may be confused now. You probably thought, like me, that it was the immaculate conception of Jesus, right? Well, Wikipedia cleared that one up for me. I quote:

'In the words of Pope Pius XII in *Mystici Corporis*, "she (Virgin Mary) was free from any personal or hereditary sin" Her immaculate conception in the womb of her mother, by normal sexual intercourse, should not be confused with the doctrine of the virginal conception of her son Jesus.'