



December 9, 2018

Second Sunday of Advent (C)

Bar 5:1–9

Phil 1:4–6, 8–11

Lk 3:1–6

The Time Is Right

Saint Luke loves to be precise in his Gospel, so he documents the exact time and place of the appearance of John the Baptist, the precursor to Jesus. Tiberius was the second emperor of Rome, and the fifteenth year of his reign corresponds to AD 27. Pontius Pilate was prefect from the years 26 to 36. Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, ruled in Galilee until his death in the year 39 and is the Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded. On the Jewish side, Caiaphas was high priest, and his influential father-in-law Annas was considered a leader of Jewish religious life.

These historical dates align with Luke's explanation, as well as other events described in his Gospel. Ours is a faith based on real people and events. No doubt there is a great appreciation for the supernatural in our faith, but it is never *against* nature, just *beyond* it.

Jesus praised John the Baptist (see Matthew 11:2–9) for his strong will and dedication. Humility, austerity, courage, and a spirit of prayer are also a large part of the testimony John left us. Palmezzano dresses him in the martyr's red and camel skin to accent his supreme virtue. So dedicated and heroic was he in his fulfillment of the mission entrusted to him, Jesus acclaimed "among those born of women there has been none greater" (Matthew 11:11). "He was a burning and shining lamp" (John 5:35) to illuminate the path toward the true light who was coming into the world. Once that divine light arrived, John receded into the shadows.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

For Reflection

Do I lead people to Jesus through my dedicated testimony?

Do I speak easily and naturally of Jesus with colleagues, family, or friends?



Piece: *Virgin and Child Surrounded by Saints* (detail), 1537

Artist: Marco Palmezzano

Location: Vatican Museums

PHOTO © GOVERNATORATO S.C.V. - DIRECTORATE OF MUSEUMS

*He went throughout [the] whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming
a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*

Luke 3:3

Calendar

Monday

DECEMBER 10

Advent Weekday

Is 35:1–10

Lk 5:17–26

Tuesday

DECEMBER 11

Advent Weekday

Is 40:1–11

Mt 18:12–14

Wednesday

DECEMBER 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Zec 2:14–17 or Rv 11:19a;

12:1–6a, 10ab

Lk 1:26–38 or

Lk 1:39–47

Thursday

DECEMBER 13

St. Lucy,

Virgin and Martyr

Is 41:13–20

Mt 11:11–15

Friday

DECEMBER 14

St. John of the Cross,

*Priest and Doctor
of the Church*

Is 48:17–19

Mt 11:16–19

Saturday

DECEMBER 15

Advent Weekday

Sir 48:1–4, 9–11

Mt 17:9a, 10–13

Sunday

DECEMBER 16

*Third Sunday
of Advent*

Zep 3:14–18a

Phil 4:4–7

Lk 3:10–18

Dear Padre,

Why doesn't the word *immaculate* also refer to Jesus' birth?

According to Webster's Dictionary, *immaculate* comes from the Latin *immaculatus*, which breaks down further into *in* (meaning “not”) and *maculatus* (meaning “spotted”). It means “without stain or blemish” and is commonly associated with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which was solemnly defined as a dogma of the Catholic faith in 1854 by Pope Pius IX. The dogma states that Mary was conceived in the womb of her mother without the stain of original sin.

Catholics sometimes mistakenly think that this doctrine refers to Jesus' birth and not to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother. In a way, it refers to both. Everything about Mary ultimately leads to her Son—including the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. How so? The Church argues both from Scripture and tradition that God deemed it proper and

fitting that humanity's Redeemer should enter the world through a womb totally unblemished by sin. Mary, in other words, was free of the effects of original sin so she could be a proper dwelling place for the birth of the Son of God.

That is not to say, however, that Mary herself was not in need of redemption. On the contrary, the dogma clearly states that she was conceived without the stain of original sin *in anticipation* of the fruits of Christ's redemptive action manifested in his passion, death, and resurrection.

—Fr. Dennis J. Billy, CSsR
Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BARTOLOMÉ ESTEBAN MURILLO / WIKI COMMONS



A Word From Pope Francis

The Immaculate Conception leads us to contemplate Our Lady who, by unique privilege, was preserved from original sin from the very moment of her conception. Even living in a world marked by sin, she was not touched by it: Mary is our sister in suffering, but not in evil or in sin.

—Angelus, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2015