

## IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY HOMILY

1. Immaculate Conception of Mary – belief Mary is first Christian and exemplar
  - a. God chose before birth, intended her to be Mother of Jesus
    - i. Brought together humanity and God in one person
    - ii. Predestined her to be Mother of Savior
  - b. Realizing Mary is example for Christians we recognize through her God has chosen us to be his children
  - c. We predestined to become holy and blameless in his sight
  - d. To be children worthy of inheriting all he can give us
2. Predestination does not take away our choices
  - a. Story of Adam and Eve is story of humanity as whole and each of us
    - i. Not only do they disobey God, try to blame others as excuse
    - ii. Story shows destructiveness of disobedience to God, what happens when go against his values
    - iii. Feel guilt and shame, realized that they were naked, began to hide
    - iv. Harmed closeness between them, blaming other for failure
  - b. Too often this is our story
    - i. Choose to do wrong
    - ii. Try to find excuses and to blame someone else
    - iii. Hurt our relationships with God and with others
  - c. Mary is symbol of another choice, one that heals the harm of sin
    - i. Sign of hope: God does not give up on us
    - ii. God sends Gabriel to ask Mary to do the impossible
      - (1) not just she conceive a child outside of intercourse, so no man is involved
      - (2) risked loss of reputation or even being stoned
        - (a) more charitable presume she and Joseph had not been chaste
        - (b) Joseph led to believe that she had been unfaithful
        - (c) could have denounced her and had her stoned to death
  - d. Mary makes courageous choice of saying yes to God despite these risks
3. In baptism for many of us our parents said yes to God for us
  - a. In our daily life it is up to us to renew our yes to God
  - b. At times in our life we may find opportunities to make choices
  - c. Often being faithful to the values God has taught us will not be the easiest or the most popular
  - d. Loving our neighbor when he is unlovable, forgiving the sinner instead of demanding revenge, caring for or standing up for the most vulnerable is often derided as being weak while in reality it takes the most courage
  - e. In Mary we see our example of a person who took even the greatest risks
    - (1) When we face difficult choices, we can always turn to Mary who has shown us the way to truly love God in our life.