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8 Wednesday

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of BVM

Genesis 3: 9 - 15, 20

Ps 98: 1 - 4

Ephesians 1: 3-6, 11-12

Luke 1: 26 - 38

“Hail, full of grace”. In latin, the angel’s greeting (“Hail”) is “Ave”. In the latin Bible, the name of Adam’s companion is Eva. Some old and famous preachers and spiritual writers loved to play with the fact that “Ave” is a reversal of the name Eva. In other words, Mary is the opposite of Eve, reversing her legacy. Mary’s obedient acceptance of what God asked of her is in contrast to Eve taking the fruit that the Lord told Adam not to eat. Mary has brought us life, in contrast to the death brought by the sin of Adam and Eve. Mary restores what Eve had lost for us..She undid the disobedience, and made paradise a possibility for us once again.

Today’s celebration, however, brings us back further, namely to Mary’s own conception and birth. It is our faith that by God’s special choice she was entirely preserved from the effects of that original sin. And so it is that we celebrate her Assumption into heaven, too, because death had no power over her. She had found such favour with God that, even before the angel Gabriel came to tell her of God’s design, she was already the “immaculate” one. So specially chosen by God, Mary is our “pattern of holiness” (as the Preface prayer of today’s Eucharist puts it).

A new way of being human was introduced by Mary’s immaculate conception, and now through the grace of Christ we also are chosen, destined for adoption and to share this paradise life. May today’s celebration of Mary sharpen our awareness that, because of her holiness, we also are chosen to be “full of grace”.