



# Saints of the Season

Second Week of Advent

## December 8 - Celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary

The feast of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary acknowledges that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was conceived without original sin. The Immaculate Conception refers to the doctrine that Mary, from the very moment of her conception, was never stained by original sin. The word immaculate literally means pure, or without blemish. A feast called the Conception of Mary arose in the Eastern Church in the seventh century. It came to the West in the eighth century. In the 11th century it received its present name, the Immaculate Conception. In the 18th century it became a feast of the universal Church. It is now recognized as a solemnity. In 1854, Pius IX solemnly proclaimed: "The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin."

In Spain, this liturgical celebration is celebrated much like the U.S. celebration of Mother's Day honoring mothers throughout the country.

### Family Activity

#### Make a Mary Candle

This is a great day to make or set out your Mary Candle. You'll need a large white pillar candle. Decorate it with symbols of Christ, such as a chi rho (the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek; it looks like a large letter P with an X across the bottom part of the stem). Place it in your family oratory or in the center of your Advent wreath. and cover it with white cloth or lace and tie a blue ribbon around it to secure the covering. Keep it covered for the remainder of Advent. The candle represents Christ, and the white cloth represents the purity of Mary. At Christmas, remove the cloth to reveal Christ, and light the candle all through the Christmas season.

In Italian, the holiday is known as Immacolata Concezione. The Immaculate Conception is one of the most important holidays to Roman Catholics and Italians. The Immaculate Conception is a holiday that encourages bonding between friends and family members. It is celebrated on December 8 each year. You may want to build a fire in your fireplace or have an outdoor bonfire. Begin a novena prayer as you gather around the fire. (The Novena usually begins 9 days before the Solemnity, but you can pray it at any time. Or simply say the "Hail Mary")

Celebrate motherhood! Donate items for mother in need at a local organization.



### More Information

[Praymorenovenas.com](http://Praymorenovenas.com) - Novena for the Immaculate Conception of Mary

[Catholicbishops.ie](http://Catholicbishops.ie) - Feast of the Immaculate Conception (pdf booklet with prayers, coloring sheet and more!

