



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

Wednesday, 8 December 2004

1. *Tota pulchra es, Maria!*

On 8 December 1854, 150 years ago, Bl. Pius IX proclaimed the *Dogma of the Immaculate Conception* of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The privilege of being preserved free from original sin means that she was the first to be redeemed by her Son. Her sublime beauty, which mirrors that of Christ, is for all believers a pledge of the victory of divine Grace over sin and death.

2. The Immaculate Conception shines like *a beacon of light for humanity in all the ages*. At the beginning of the third millennium, it guides us to believe and hope in God, in his salvation and in eternal life. In particular, it lights the way of the Church, which is committed to the new evangelization.

3. *This afternoon*, in my traditional tribute to the Blessed Virgin in *Piazza di Spagna*, I will entrust the city of Rome and the whole world to her, the Immaculate Mother of the Word made Man. Let us now pray for her powerful intercession with filial trust as we recite the Angelus.

After the recitation of the Angelus, the Holy Father said:

Yesterday evening in Mossul, Iraq, an Armenian Apostolic Church and the Chaldean Archbishop's

residence were destroyed. I express my spiritual closeness to the faithful, deeply distressed by the attack, and I pray the Lord through the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin that the Iraqi People may at last experience a time of reconciliation and peace.

I greet the pilgrims present, in particular the representatives of the Pontifical Academy of the Immaculate Conception, led by Cardinal Andrzej Maria Deskur. Dear friends, on this feast day I am particularly close to you. I pray for you and encourage you to persevere in your devotion to Mary Immaculate.

May the Virgin obtain the graces desired for one and all.

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