

thus tempted to recite three times every day the Hail Mary in honor of Mary immaculate. And the Venerable John of Avila assures us that he never found any one who practised a true devotion to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, who did not in a short time obtain the gift of that virtue which renders us so dear to her immaculate heart.

Prayer of the Church (Page 2)

Litany of Loreto (Page 3—4)

Prayer

O LIVING light of holiness, model of purity, Mary immaculate, virgin and mother! As soon as thou wast conceived thou didst profoundly adore thy God, giving Him thanks that in thee the ancient curse was revoked, and blessing came again upon the sinful sons of Adam. O make this blessing kindle in my heart love for God; and do thou fan this flame of love within me, that I may love Him constantly and one day in heaven eternally enjoy Him, there to thank Him more and more fervently for all the wondrous privileges conferred on thee, and to rejoice with thee for thy high crown of glory.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

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Novena in Honor of the Immaculate Conception

Part II

Chapter II of VI



FIRST DAY

Predestination of the Blessed Virgin Mary

PREPARATORY PRAYER

IN THY conception, O Virgin Mary, thou wast immaculate; pray for us to the Father, whose Son Jesus, conceived in thy womb by the Holy Ghost, thou didst bring forth.

MEDITATION

HOLY Church, our Mother, purposely gathered into the season of Advent everything which might contribute to assist us in preparing for the coming of the Redeemer. Purity of heart is the most necessary and helpful requirement for receiving God worthily, and for participating in the fruits of our Redemption through Christ. To remind us of this, Holy Church celebrates the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, this primary feast of purity, in Advent.

The Church, moreover, intends to remind us that the coming of Christ, our promised Redeemer, depended on the consent of the Blessed Virgin. The Redeemer could not appear before she was born of whom He was to be born. The aurora must precede the rising sun. Thus also Mary, the spiritual aurora, had to be conceived and born before the appearance of the Sun of Justice in this world.

PRACTICE

IN MARY appeared the woman who was to crush the serpent's head, who was to repair by her willing co-operation with God's designs the damage wrought by the disobedience of our first parents, and who was to become our mother and mighty advocate with God.

The designs of God concerning Mary were fully accomplished. God also has designs concerning us. Our life was planned by Him from all eternity, and we were destined to co-operate with Him harmoniously and conscientiously in working out our salvation. Have we corresponded with God's designs? Did we not oppose them by yielding to our evil inclinations and passions? What a disparity between God's intentions concerning us and our own co-operation, between His merciful designs and our cowardly resistance to them!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O GOD, who through the immaculate conception of the Virgin didst prepare a worthy dwelling-place for Thy divine Son; grant that, as in view of Thy Son Thou didst

In Thy Conception...

MEDITATION

EARLY in the Christian era the feast of Mary's immaculate conception was observed in several countries. St. Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury, introduced it in England. A great number of Popes favored the doctrine of Mary's absolute sinlessness, and the adversaries of the Immaculate Conception were bidden to be silent and not publicly assert or defend their view. In 1477, Pope Sixtus IV prescribed the feast of the Immaculate Conception to be observed in the whole Church, and made it obligatory on priests to recite the special canonical office and to use the Mass formula published for the purpose. In 1846, the bishops of the United States assembled in plenary council in Baltimore elected the Blessed Virgin under the title of her immaculate conception Patroness of the Church in their country.

Finally, Pope Pius IX, after consulting with the bishops throughout the world, and having implored the Holy Ghost for His guidance in prayer and fasting, promulgated, on December 8, 1854, the dogma which teaches that the Blessed Virgin Mary was in her conception, by a special grace and through the merits of her divine Son, preserved from the stain of original sin. This doctrine was received throughout the world with ineffable joy; and, indeed, no one who loves the Blessed Virgin can help rejoicing at this her most glorious privilege.

The invocation, "Queen conceived without the stain of original sin," was added to the Litany of Loreto. In 1866, at the Second Plenary Council in Baltimore, the feast of the Immaculate Conception was raised to the rank of a holyday of obligation for the Church of the United States.

PRACTICE

IN THE inscrutable designs of His providence God ordained that the mystery of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary should be proclaimed an article of faith as late as the middle of the nineteenth century. But, then, its proclamation was attended by circumstances that undeniably proved that the Holy Father in pronouncing the dogma had been inspired and guided by the Holy Ghost.

Let us praise God and thank Him for bestowing this glorious privilege on our beloved Mother, and let us often invoke her under her favorite title, the Immaculate Conception. St. Alphonsus Liguori tells us that the devotion to this mystery is especially efficacious in overcoming the temptations of impurity. Therefore he was accustomed to recommend to his penitents

she trampled under foot earthly possessions, vanities, and joys. (2) A serpent is coiled about the globe, bearing an apple in its mouth. This reminds us of the fall of our first parents, and of the consequences of their sin. (3) Mary's foot rests on the serpent, indicating that she never was under Satan's dominion, but was preserved from sin in the first moment of her existence. (4) Mary stands on the moon. The moon, on account of its changes, is an emblem of inconstancy. We see it at Mary's feet, to be reminded that we ought to be constant in faith and virtue. (5) Mary wears a crown, to indicate that she is a queen. The crown is composed of twelve stars: she is the queen of heaven. (6) Mary's dress is white, to denote her spotless purity and innocence. (7) She folds her hands in prayer, reminding us to imitate her example. (8) Or she holds a lily in her right hand, to indicate her virginity and chastity, and the sweet odor of her virtues. (9) Mary's mantle is blue, which color is emblematic of humility. Its folds are ample, to remind us that all who have recourse to her find a secure refuge in all dangers and necessities.

Therefore let us invoke her intercession in the words of Holy Church: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God. Despise not our petitions, and deliver us from all danger, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin!"

Prayer of the Church (Page 2)

Litany of Loreto (Page 3—4)

Prayer

O SPOTLESS sun! O Virgin Mary! I congratulate thee. I rejoice with thee because in thy conception God gave thee grace greater and more boundless than He ever shed on all His angels and all the saints, together with all their merits. I am thankful and I marvel at the surpassing beneficence of the ever-blessed Trinity, who conferred on thee this privilege. O make me correspond with the grace of God and never abuse it. Change this heart of mine; make me now begin to amend my life.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

NINTH DAY

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

preserve her from all taint, so Thou wouldst vouchsafe unto us that cleansed from all sin by her intercession we too may arrive at Thine eternal glory. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Litany of Loreto

LORD, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us,
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
Holy Mary, pray for us.
Holy Mother of God, pray for us.
Holy Virgin of virgins, pray for us.
Mother of Christ, pray for us.
Mother of divine grace, pray for us.
Mother most pure, pray for us.
Mother most chaste, pray for us.
Mother inviolate, pray for us.
Mother undefiled, pray for us.
Mother most amiable, pray for us.
Mother most admirable, pray for us.
Mother of good counsel, pray for us.
Mother of our Creator, pray for us.
Mother of our Redeemer, pray for us.
Virgin most prudent, pray for us.
Virgin most venerable, pray for us.
Virgin most renowned, pray for us.
Virgin most powerful, pray for us.
Virgin most merciful, pray for us.
Virgin most faithful, pray for us.
Mirror of justice, pray for us.
Seat of wisdom, pray for us.
Cause of our joy, pray for us.
Spiritual vessel, pray for us.
Vessel of honor, pray for us.
Singular vessel of devotion, pray for us.
Mystical rose, pray for us.
Tower of David, pray for us.
Tower of ivory, pray for us.
House of gold, pray for us.

Ark of the covenant, pray for us.
Gate of heaven, pray for us.
Morning star, pray for us.
Health of the sick, pray for us.
Refuge of sinners, pray for us.
Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us.
Help of Christians, pray for us.
Queen of angels, pray for us.
Queen of patriarchs, pray for us.
Queen of prophets, pray for us.
Queen of apostles, pray for us.
Queen of martyrs, pray for us.
Queen of confessors, pray for us.
Queen of virgins, pray for us.
Queen of all saints, pray for us.
Queen conceived without original sin, pray for us.
Queen of the most holy rosary, pray for us.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world: Spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world: Graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world: Have mercy on us, O Lord.
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God:
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

POUR forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

VOUCHSAFE, O Lord, that we may be helped by the merits of Thy most holy Mother's spouse; that what of ourselves we can not obtain may be given us through his intercession. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Prayer

BEHOLD, Virgin immaculate, at thy sacred feet I bow, while my heart overflows with joy in union with thine own, because from eternity thou wast the Mother-elect of the eternal Word, and was preserved stainless from the taint of Adam's sin. Forever praised, forever blessed be the Most Holy Trinity, who in thy conception poured out

Prayer of the Church (Page 2)

Litany of Loreto (Page 3—4)

Prayer

MARY immaculate, rising morn of purity, I rejoice with thee, gazing in wonder upon thy soul confirmed in grace from the very first moment of thy conception, and rendered inaccessible to sin. I thank and magnify the ever-blessed Trinity, who chose thee from all our race for this special privilege. Holy Virgin, obtain for me utter and constant hatred of all sin above every other evil, and let me rather die than ever again fall into sin.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

EIGHTH DAY

The Image of the Immaculate Conception

Preparatory Prayer (Page 2)

In Thy Conception...

MEDITATION

CHRISTIAN art represents the Immaculate Conception as follows: The Blessed Virgin appears standing on a globe, about which is coiled a serpent holding an apple in its mouth. One of Mary's feet rests upon the serpent, the other is placed on the moon. Her eyes are raised toward heaven; her hands are either joined in prayer, or she holds a lily in her right, and places the left on her breast. Her dress is white; her ample mantle is of blue color. A crown of twelve stars encircles her head. These emblems typify in a most striking manner Mary's power and glory. "And a great sign appeared in heaven. A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (*Apoc.* xii. 1).

PRACTICE

THE representation of the Immaculate Conception is very instructive. (1) Mary appears standing on the globe. This signifies that being human, she belongs to the earth, and yet is exalted above the world and sin; also, that

SEVENTH DAY

Mary, the Mother of Chastity

Preparatory Prayer (Page 2)

In Thy Conception...

MEDITATION

HOLY Scripture and the Fathers agree in the statement that the Blessed Virgin Mary made the vow of perpetual virginity. For when the Archangel Gabriel brought God's message to the immaculate spouse of St. Joseph, that she was to become the Mother of the Most High, she asked, "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (*Luke* i. 34.) Indeed, Mary would not have been, in the full and most excellent sense of the word, the "Virgin of virgins," had she not from her own free choice vowed her virginity to God.

During the whole Christian era there have been heroic souls who made the vow of perpetual chastity, consecrating themselves to God. Trusting in the powerful protection of the immaculate Virgin, they persevered in their resolve to bear this priceless treasure before God's throne despite the dangers of the world, the temptations of concupiscence, and the assaults of hell, and with the help of the queen of virgins they achieved a triumphant victory.

PRACTICE

SINCE the fall of Adam our senses are in rebellion against the law of God. "I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin" (*Rom.* vii. 23). Chastity is the virtue which causes us the greatest struggles. St. Augustine says: "The fiercest of all combats is the one for the preservation of chastity, and we must engage in it every day." Fierce as this combat is, the aid which Mary gives her children to achieve victory is all-powerful. She sustains them by her maternal love and protection. Those who lead a chaste life receive the Divine Spirit, are happy in this life, and will receive a special crown in heaven.

Among the means for the preservation of chastity, the following are specially recommended: The assiduous and constant practice of self-denial; the frequentation of the sacraments; the daily invocation of Mary for her aid and protection; scrupulous avoidance of the occasions of sin. St. Chrysostom writes: "He errs who believes that he can overcome his sensual propensities and preserve chastity by his own efforts. God's mercy must extinguish nature's ardor." Have recourse to the intercession of the immaculate Virgin and rest assured that you will obtain this mercy.

upon thy soul the riches of that matchless privilege. I humbly pray thee, most gracious Mother, obtain for me the grace to overcome the bitter results of original sin. Make me victorious over them, that I may never cease to love my God.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

SECOND DAY

Mary's Immaculate Conception

Preparatory Prayer (Page 2)

In Thy Conception...

MEDITATION

ACCORDING to the definition of Pope Pius IX, the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is that privilege by which she was preserved, in view of the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, from original sin in the first moment of her conception.

By solemnly proclaiming the dogma of Mary's immaculate conception, the Church confirmed anew the fundamental principles of Christianity which in our times are so frequently attacked, derided, or forgotten. God reserved the solemn proclamation of this dogma, which seemingly has no practical bearing on the Christian life, for our age, to recall to our mind the doctrines resulting from it.

PRACTICE

THE most important of these doctrines is that of original sin, which to-day is rejected by many as a debasement of human nature, and is forgotten by others as having no practical influence on our moral state. By the promulgation of the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Church solemnly declares and defines as an article of faith, that the Blessed Virgin Mary is conceived without the stain of original sin by a special privilege and grace of God. If, then, Mary's sinlessness is an exception, the general rule remains in force, and all other human beings

exception, the general rule remains in force, and all other human beings enter this world in the state of original sin.

Thus, by the proclamation of the dogma of the immaculate conception, the Church combats human pride and sensuality, the foremost vices of the age.

Prayer of the Church (Page 2)

Litany of Loreto (Page 3—4)

Prayer

MARY, unsullied lily of heavenly purity, I rejoice with thee, because at thy conception's earliest dawn thou wast full of grace and endowed with the perfect use of reason. I thank and adore the ever-blessed Trinity, who gave thee such high gifts. I am overwhelmed with shame in thy presence, to see myself so poor in grace. O thou who wast filled with heavenly grace, impart some portion of it to my soul, and make me share the treasures of thy immaculate conception.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

THIRD DAY

Mary, the Victrix of Satan

Preparatory Prayer (Page 2)

In Thy Conception...

MEDITATION

THE immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary inaugurated the fulfilment of the divine promise made to our first parents in paradise in the words addressed to the serpent: "I shall put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head" (*Gen.* iii. 15). Mary is the woman in whom Satan never had a part. Her intimate connection with God was announced by the angel: "Hail, full of grace; the Lord is with thee." Now was fulfilled the saying of the Psalmist, "The Most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle. God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved: God will help it in the morning early" (*Ps.* xlv. 5-6). Mary was chosen to be the glorious tabernacle of the Son of God "in the morning early," that is, in the first

MEDITATION

WE CARRY the precious treasure of sanctifying grace in a frail vessel. Our inclination to evil remains with us, and continues to impel us to that which is forbidden. On whom shall we call for aid? Call on Mary! She is conceived without sin. She, the lily among thorns, who never lost God's friendship, is our advocate. Let her, who was found worthy to become the Mother of our Redeemer, inspire you with trust and confidence. The Church invokes her as the refuge of sinners, and under no other title does she show her love for us more convincingly and her power with God more efficiently.

PRACTICE

WE MAY trust confidently in Mary's intercession and aid in all temptations and trials, if we but have recourse to her. Therefore St. John Damascene writes: "Come to my aid, O Mother of my Redeemer! Thou art my help, my consolation in life. Come to my aid, and I shall escape un-scorched from the fire of temptation; amongst a thousand I shall remain unharmed; I shall brave the storms of assault un-wrecked. Thy name is my shield, thy help my armor, thy protection my defense. With thee I boldly attack the enemy and drive him off in confusion; through thee I shall achieve a triumphant victory." In all temptations, therefore, let us have recourse to Mary and through her intercession we shall overcome them.

Prayer of the Church (Page 2)

Litany of Loreto (Page 3—4)

Prayer

MARY immaculate, most brilliant star of purity, I rejoice with thee because thy immaculate conception has bestowed upon the angels in paradise the greatest joy. I thank and bless the ever-blessed Trinity, who enriched thee with this high privilege. O let me, too, one day enter into this heavenly joy, in the company of angels, that I may praise and bless thee, world without end.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

Church, in our behalf, addresses the Almighty: "O God, who through the immaculate conception of the Virgin didst prepare a worthy dwelling-place for Thy divine Son; grant, that, as in view of the death of that Son Thou didst preserve her from all taint, so Thou wouldst vouchsafe unto us that, cleansed from all sin by her intercession, we too may arrive at Thine eternal glory."

PRACTICE

THE world considers men according to their rank and station, their wealth and knowledge. God recognizes in them but one difference, that caused by the presence or absence of sanctifying grace in their soul. A soul in the state of sanctifying grace is God's friend; without it, His enemy. A man dying in the state of sanctifying grace is sure of eternal bliss. Therefore we ought to prize this grace above all else, and do everything in our power to preserve it. St. Leo exhorts us, "Recognize, O man, thy dignity! As thou hast received divine grace, beware of returning to your former sinful condition by a wicked life."

Prayer of the Church (Page 2)

Litany of Loreto (Page 3—4)

Prayer

MARY, bright moon of purity, I rejoice with thee, because the mystery of thy immaculate conception was the beginning of salvation for the race of man and the joy of the whole world. I thank and bless the ever-blessed Trinity, who thus did magnify and glorify thee; and I beg of thee to obtain for me the grace so to profit by thy dear Son's death and passion, that His precious blood may not have been shed in vain for me upon the cross, but that, after a holy life, I may reach heaven in safety.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

SIXTH DAY

Mary, Our Refuge

Preparatory Prayer (Page 2)

In Thy Conception...

moment of her existence. God called her into being that she might assume the exalted dignity of the Mother of His Son, and therefore granted her the singular privilege of exemption from original sin. In her were fulfilled Solomon's prophetic words of praise, "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee" (*Cant.* iv. 7). It was in view of her Son's merits applied to her beforehand that God thus produced in her the image of the new man regenerated in the Holy Ghost.

PRACTICE

THE spirit of darkness holds mankind enslaved, but one human being escapes him. A destructive fire lays waste the whole earth, but one tree remains unscathed. A terrible tyrant conquers the whole world, but one fortified city repels his assaults. This human being retaining liberty, this tree escaping destruction, this city repelling the enemy's attack is the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Will the almighty and merciful God, who has accomplished such great things in Mary, who has selected her for His Mother, not listen to her prayers when she intercedes for us? St. William of Paris exclaims: "No other created being can obtain for us so many and so great graces from God as His Mother. By the all-powerful might of her intercession He honors her not only as His handmaid, but also as His Mother." Therefore we ought not be surprised when the holy Fathers maintain that a single sigh of Mary is more effective with God than the combined intercession of all the angels and saints. If, then, Mary's power is so great, she will surely hear us when we invoke her help in our combat with Satan. Having conquered him herself, she will also help us to conquer him.

Prayer of the Church (Page 2)

Litany of Loreto (Page 3-4)

Prayer

MARY, thou mystical rose of purity, my heart rejoices with thine at the glorious triumph which thou didst gain over the infernal serpent by thy immaculate conception, and because thou wast conceived without stain of original sin. I thank and praise with my whole heart the ever-blessed Trinity, who granted thee this glorious privilege; and I pray thee to obtain for me strength to overcome all the wiles of the infernal foe, and never to stain my soul with sin. Be thou mine aid; make me, by thy protection, victorious over the common foe of our eternal welfare.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

FOURTH DAY

Mary without Actual Sin

Preparatory Prayer (Page 2)

In Thy Conception...

MEDITATION

MARY conceived without sin is the most blessed daughter of the eternal Father, the real and true Mother of the divine Son, the elect spouse of the Holy Ghost. But in the world, in what condition do we behold her? She dwells not in a splendid palace; she is not surrounded by a retinue of servants ready at every moment to do her bidding; she is not exempt from trials and suffering. On the contrary, she is poor; she lives in obscurity, and suffered so much on earth that, without shedding her blood, she merits to be styled the queen of martyrs. Her heart was transfixed with the sword of sorrow. Mary is not exempt from tribulations and adversity; but one thing God does not permit to touch her, *i.e.*, sin. Hence Holy Church applies to her the words, "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee" (*Cant.* iv. 7).

PRACTICE

THOUGH we were not preserved from sin like Mary, yet God in His ineffable goodness and mercy granted us the grace to be cleansed from sin and to be clothed with the garment of sanctifying grace in Baptism. No treasure of the world can be compared with this prerogative. But as we bear this grace in a fragile vase, we must be most careful to protect and preserve it in ourselves and others from all danger. Let the Blessed Virgin Mary be our example. Well knowing the inestimable value of the grace conferred upon her, she guarded it with the greatest care. Although exempt from concupiscence and "full of grace," she was so distrustful of herself as if she were in continual danger. How much more, then, must we use precaution to preserve in ourselves and in others this treasure of grace, since we feel in ourselves constantly the law of the flesh, which resists the law of the spirit, and urges us on to evil, whilst the world and the devil never weary in placing snares for us in order to accomplish our ruin. Therefore let us have recourse to Mary, and invoking her aid bravely resist all temptations.

Prayer of the Church (Page 2)

Litany of Loreto (Page 3—4)

Prayer

MIRROR of holy purity, Mary, Virgin immaculate, great is my joy while I consider that, from thy immaculate conception, the most sublime and perfect virtues were infused into thy soul, and with them all the gifts of the Holy Ghost. I thank and praise the Most Holy Trinity, who bestowed on thee these high privileges. I pray thee, gentle Mother, obtain for me grace to practise virtue, and to make me worthy to become partaker of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost.

Hail Mary, etc.

Ejaculation

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

FIFTH DAY

Mary, Full of Grace

Preparatory Prayer (Page 2)

In Thy Conception...

MEDITATION

SATAN'S relation to God as His child was severed by sin. The beautiful image of God imprinted on man's soul was disfigured by it. But with the immaculate conception of Mary, a being full of grace, an object of God's supreme complacency entered this world. After the lapse of four thousand years God, in His wisdom, power, and love, for the first time again created a human being in that state in which He had originally created our first parents. Mary, from the first moment of her existence was, in virtue of the sanctifying grace infused into her soul, most intimately united with God, and endowed with the most precious gifts of heaven. Because she was predestined to become the Mother of the Redeemer of mankind, it was befitting that she should unite in herself all the gifts becoming to such an ineffable dignity. Hence she surpassed in grace and holiness all other created beings, and was consecrated a worthy temple of the incarnate Word. Therefore she was saluted by the angel as "full of grace," and the