

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The doctrine held by the [Roman](#) Catholic church that from the very first moment of her conception, the [Virgin Mary](#) was free from the stain of original sin, and that, unlike the rest of mankind, she inherited human nature in an unsullied condition to make her worthy of being the Mother of Christ. A feast in honor of the Immaculate Conception (8 December) was established by Pope Sixtus IV of [Rome](#) in 1476. Pope Pius IX promulgated the dogma in his act *Ineffabilis Deus* on 8 [December](#) 1854.

This dogma had had many opponents as well as proponents. The Orthodox Church, however, repudiates it on the grounds that salvation of all human beings was effected only through the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and that, in the words of Paul the apostle, “Therefore as sin came into the world through one man . . . , as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men” (Rom. 5:12, 18). The apostle Peter also states: “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under [heaven](#) given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Again, the Virgin Mary’s words “My spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Lk. 1:46) confirm her need, like all human beings, for God’s salvation.

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