

## The Immaculate Conception

There is nothing in the Scriptures that directly supports the theology of Immaculate Conception. Although there is a passage of the Old Testament Book of Isaiah that predicts a “virgin shall conceive and bear a son,” the Hebrew word used for “virgin” is ambiguous and could also be “young woman.”

So what is the rationale for this teaching of the Church? Mostly, the idea of the Immaculate Conception comes from medieval theological musings. Scholars questioned how the perfect Son of God, Jesus, could

be born through a human being laboring under the burden of Original Sin. They reasoned that Mary had to be a special case; Mary must have entered the world without original sin to prepare the perfect environment for the Son of God to enter the world.



The theology of the Immaculate Conception was the source of much speculation among theologians until middle of the nineteenth century. Pope Pius IX declared it a doctrine of the Church in 1854. Four years later, a young girl, Bernadette Soubiroux of Lourdes, began having visions of the Virgin Mary that would confirmed the doctrine’s authenticity.

For most of us, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception tells us that God’s plan of salvation is present even when it is unseen. Like Mary, God is working through us in ways that we may not even know. It is up to us to cooperate with God’s grace by prayer and discernment.