



Homily for the Feast of **The Immaculate Conception**

It is the time of year we wait and watch. It is the time we learn to be prepared for the coming of God into our lives. But there is a flip side to waiting and watching. And that flip side asks this question: what do you do when you actually encounter God in your life and you are asked to respond? To put it another way: what happens when the waiting is over?

The answer to that question lies in today's Feast. For in this Feast we honor Mary who was able to respond completely. We celebrate Mary's capacity to be unafraid to abandon the plans of her life in order to accept the invitation from God to live differently. With no promise of happiness and with no blueprint for the future, Mary responds to God by saying: "Let it be done according to Your will."

It is easy to let this Season of Advent and the Season of Christmas become filled with romantic images and Christmas card feelings. But the truth of faith is that the coming of God into our lives demands a response. Today we look to Mary...Mary who was so favored by God as to be Immaculately Conceived...Mary who was not afraid of the way of faith but instead embraced it as her life journey. May we also respond to God who invites us to change our lives. May we who encounter Christ every time we receive the Eucharist, have the faith and the trust in God's love to echo the words of Mary and pray to God: "let it be done to me according to Your will."