

Homily

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

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There were three great decisions made in history. Does anyone know what they were? One was Mary saying yes to the Angel Gabriel. She could have said no. Eve had the same choice. We heard that story just now too, didn't we?

Did you ever wonder why Eve's story is in the same liturgy? It was there to make a point. As easy as it is to say yes, it is as easy to say no. And the implications of a yes or no can last forever. The history of mankind was influenced by Eve. Actually we heard it in the second reading, where it said that we were made in a perfect image of God. "Without blemish" was the wording that was used. Until Eve said "No." we were without blemish. There was no need for Purgatory, heck there was no need for Hell for us. Because we were without blemish.

Eve had a choice to say "Yes" to the rule that was nothing more than a rule of obedience. "Don't do this." Eve's sin was one of disobedience. So many people will tell you that Eve did this or she didn't do that. The bottom line was, it's disobedience.

And then we have Mary. A teenager. A teenager. We cannot compare a 17 year old today with a 17 year old 2000 years ago in Judea. You cannot compare the cultures and the attitudes and the way people think. So don't try to compare them. But we still had a teenager who had a surprise visitor. And he laid a heavy line on her. "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with you." That's the kind of language that the priests use in the Temple, and she's hearing that in her own room! And he gave her an opportunity to back away, and her response, which again influenced the world forever, was it a yes or a no? It was a yes.

And then we have the third great yes or no. And that is the decisions you and I make on a daily basis. The decisions we make to say "No, to Satan, or Yes to God." But you can flip that. It could be "Yes to Satan and no to God." And I will offer to you that how we answer these points, these events in our lives, and they're almost always at a yes/no, these crucial spiritual events are going to define our eternity.

How we answer them isn't just going to get blown away – “Oh, nobody's going to remember this next week. Or, “I've been doing this for so long, no one cares.” My brothers and sisters, this stuff adds up. Grace adds up, and sin adds up. Which side of the scale do you want to have higher than the other? But we influence that balance with how we answer yes or no.

We have two examples behind us. We have opportunities to learn from both of them. But are we brave enough to say yes to the unknown? That's what Mary did. Do you think she had a clue as to what was in store for her? No way! She did it in faith and trust. And what else do we have – all of us here, what do we really have to hang on to? Our children? When we're passed away, children won't matter. Who are we going to be answering to? Our parents? They're gone too. My brothers and sisters we're going to answer to God! And that's what counts.

I'd rather learn from Mary, though I fail and sometimes I take Eve's path. I'd rather learn from Mary, from her example, than Eve's. But it takes work and it takes trust in God's love. We need to realize that by ourselves we cannot do this. Jesus knew we could not do this by ourselves. And he gave us a gift. He gave us a gift to help us through this process. What was this gift? It was His Body and Blood. He did not have to do that. It is pure gift. But boy what a gift! And that's what we need to rely on.

The fact that you're here tonight speaks volumes about who you are and where your focus is. And I think that's tremendous. Because in truth, I can depend on my wife all that I want, but when I stand before God, I can't say, “Hey Fran come on up here and give me testimony.” It doesn't work that way. I'm going to need in help. And Jesus is what I'm going to have to rely on. Trust in Him.