

Reflect that you are about to receive into your breast that same Incarnate Word which Mary conceived in her womb, she with so much preparation, you so devoid of any! Remember that he who communicates receives the same Lord Whom Mary conceived. If the Mother of God was troubled at conceiving Him, surrounded as she was with such great sanctity, how can you, so utterly unworthy, not tremble at approaching to receive Him? The Virgin "full of grace" fears, and you, defiled with sin, fear not! Endeavour to form a just conception of so great an action, preparing yourself assiduously for receiving frequently the Eternal Word, since the Virgin prepared herself so carefully in order to conceive Him once.

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To this disposition of her whole life the event which followed corresponded well. Concealed and separated from all human bustle was this Lady — given up completely to Divine communications. So retired from earth, so familiar with Heaven, it needed that an Angel should enter to search for her hidden retreat, and that he should knock at the solitude of her heart, so retired in herself was she, so absorbed in her devotion.

Her virginal modesty veiled her beauty, her circumspect humility was the rampart of her chastity. Full of astonishment, the Angel salutes her. Mary, troubled, listens—she who could teach the very angelic spirits purity.

The sacred Paranympth invites her to the Divine maternity, and she attends to the defence of her virginity; she bends with her whole being as she accepts the offer of the greatest of honours, and she consents, not to be a Queen, but a handmaid. In every word she utters a wonder is contained, and in each action that she performs a prodigy.

O soul, approach and learn virtues, study perfections, copy this original and learn to receive your God; reflect with what humility you should come near, with what reverence kneel in His presence! If the Virgin, so crowned with perfections, was troubled, if, so full of grace,

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