

# TO THE Heights

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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Giovanni Battista Gaulli, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Year C

## Sunday Mass Readings

**First Reading:**

Baruch 5:1-9

**Responsorial Psalm:**

Psalm 125 (126)

**Second Reading:**

Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

**Gospel:**

Luke 3:1-6

*"A voice cries the the wilderness:  
prepare a way for the Lord, make  
His paths straight..."*

## Game Changers

The Catholic Church's Liturgical Calendar is crammed full of inspirational saints, or as we like to call them, Game Changers!

You can check out our other Game Changer resources on our website: [www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry).

6 December

[St Nicholas](#)

7 December

[St Ambrose](#)

8 December

[Immaculate Conception of Our Lady](#)

9 December

[St Juan Diego](#)

10 December

[Our Lady of Loreto](#)



## Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading.  
Don't have a Bible? No worries, click the bible image!



1. Luke mentions a lot of names and places at the beginning of this passage: which names have you heard of before, and what part do they play in the Gospels?
2. John's father is mentioned - can you remember his mother's name? What relation was she to Mary?
3. What was involved in John's mission and ministry?
4. What Old Testament prophet is quoted?
5. What or who was John preparing people for?
6. The wilderness can be seen as a place of encounter with God - have I ever had an encounter with God? Am I looking for one?



## Gospel Reflection: PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD



This week and next, our Gospel readings invite us to consider John the Baptist and his relationship to Jesus. John the Baptist appears in the tradition of the great prophets, preaching repentance and reform to the people of Israel. To affirm this, Luke quotes at length from the prophet Isaiah. John baptizes for repentance and for forgiveness of sins, preparing the way for God's salvation.

The three Synoptic Gospels—Mark, Matthew, and Luke—attest to the importance of the baptism of John in preparing for Jesus. Only the Gospel of Luke, however, extends the connection between these two men to their birth. The first two chapters of Luke's Gospel contain the Infancy Narrative, which tells about the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. These stories set the stage for the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in chapter 3.

The evangelist Luke is the author of the Gospel that bears his name, and he also wrote the Acts of the Apostles as a continuation of the story of Jesus and the Church. In these two works, Luke's sense of time and history emerges. He identifies three epochs of salvation history: the time before Christ, the time of Christ, and the time of the Church and the Holy Spirit. In today's Gospel reading, as elsewhere, John the Baptist is presented as the figure who bridges the time before Christ and prepares the way for Christ's own ministry.

In today's Gospel we also note Luke's attention to political and historical detail. Luke shows that salvation is for all people and situated in world events. Therefore, Luke lists the political and religious leaders at the time of John's appearance in the desert. Salvation is understood as God's breaking into this political and social history.

John's preaching of the coming of the Lord is a key theme of the Advent season. As John's message prepared the way for Jesus, we too are called to prepare ourselves for Jesus' coming. We respond to John's message by repentance and reform of our lives. We are also called to be prophets of Christ, who announce by our lives the coming of the Lord, as John did.

*adapted from Loyola Press: Sunday Connections*



"Confession is a place of victory!"  
Fr Mike Schmitz

## ADVENT: PREPARE WELL!

In this Gospel passage, we hear about Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, who lived a radical and unconventional lifestyle in response to a personal call by God to prepare the way for the Messiah. John understood that a genuine conversion of heart would be necessary to really accept the Messiah' message. He wanted people to repent and believe, to prepare a way for the Messiah.

In the Catholic tradition, one of the most beautiful and healing sacraments is the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession. It is a chance to take stock of our lives, see what is going well and not so well, see what is hindering us from drawing close to God and what we need forgiveness for. God's mercy is freely available to us. He doesn't just offer to mend our broken hearts: He puts a new heart in us each time we go to confession, and strengthens us so we can follow the path to Heaven again!

USE THIS WEEK'S RESOURCE TO HELP YOU!

## CHECK IT OUT: LIVE ADVENT DIFFERENTLY!

Daily online Advent Calendar from Ascend Youth Ministry (Diocese of Waterford & Lismore), with practical actions, a short prayer, and a song / video for each day of the Advent Season. Take a few minutes each day to prepare your heart well for Christmas! Bookmark the page / add to your home screen. <https://tinyurl.com/AscendAdvent>



## TEACHER'S CORNER

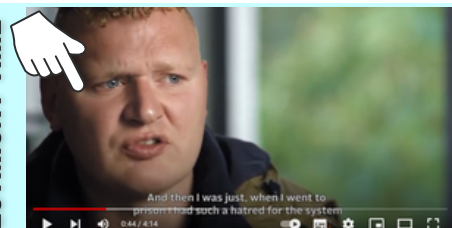
### Pilgrimage through Revelation:

Wed 7.30 - 9pm: Oct 20 - Dec 15. Prayer, Teaching / Study, Tea / Coffee at the Foyer of Charity, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford, X91 FC65 [www.foyerofcharity.ie](http://www.foyerofcharity.ie) Please book as limited places. Helen : 086 167802, [hellywilliams@gmail.com](mailto:hellywilliams@gmail.com)

### Lectio Divina:

The praying with the Scriptures, led by the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. 2 options: Thurs @ 2pm in St. John's Pastoral Centre / Thurs @ 7:30pm at Sacred Heart Parish Centre. Please register at [waterford@ascjusus.org](http://waterford@ascjusus.org) or call 087-4042785

## TESTIMONY TIME



Alpha Testimony: Shane Taylor

## Young Person's Prayer



### ACT OF SORROW:

O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins; for not loving others and not loving You. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen

## TUNE OF THE WEEK

### Prepare the Way

Charlie Hall



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE:



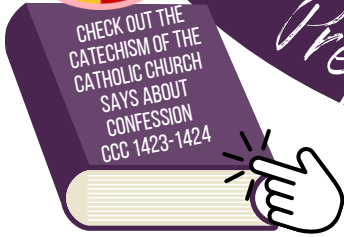
Take some time over the next few days or weeks to make a good examination of conscience. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you try to remember any areas of your life where you failed in your relationship with God, others or yourself; times where you failed to show love or deliberately ignored God's will or guidance for your life. Find out when your local church has confessions and decide to go. you can pray for the priest in advance too!

### WATCH:

Confession is a place of Victory (Fr Mike Schmitz)







LUKE 3:1-6



# Prepare the Way for the Lord

"Confession is a place of victory!"  
Fr Mike Schmitz

DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ADMIT WHEN YOU'RE WRONG?  
 DO YOU FIND IT HARD TO GO TO CONFESSION? WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?  
 SHARE WITH ANOTHER PERSON IF YOU ARE HAPPY TO.



WHAT KIND OF THINGS MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO GO TO CONFESSION?

WHAT DO YOU IMAGINE CONFESSION IS LIKE FROM A PRIEST'S PERSPECTIVE?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "CONFESSION IS A PLACE OF VICTORY" (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



Fr Mike describes confession as **"one of the most joyful, humble and inspiring places in the world"**. Does this surprise you? Why (or why not)?



## THREE THINGS THE PRIEST SEES IN CONFESSION:

### 1. THE COSTLY MERCY OF GOD IN ACTION.



People who are **discouraged** being \_\_\_\_\_

People who are **wounded** being \_\_\_\_\_

People who are **lost** being \_\_\_\_\_

People who are t \_\_\_\_\_

People saying: "I'm not going to give up on the God who won't \_\_\_\_\_"

### 2. THE HUMAN PERSON, PART OF GOD'S MASTERPIECE.

Fr Mike says sins are like \_\_\_\_\_. That means that priests are like God's \_\_\_\_\_ collectors!

"Sins are boring". What is fascinating / memorable is the \_\_\_\_\_



### 3. THE PRIEST'S OWN SOUL AND HIS OWN HEART.

Sometimes a priest will recognise something in their own life when they hear another confess it. It can act as an examination of \_\_\_\_\_ for the priest himself.



# PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

LUKE 3:1-6



Fr Mike's father was a surgeon who saved lives and healed bodies. What did he say his son (Fr Mike) would do with his priest's hands?

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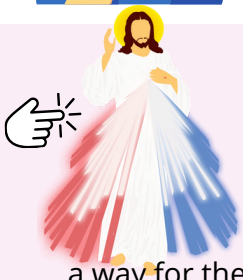
## CONFESSION IS A PLACE OF VICTORY.

THE PRIEST HEARING CONFESSIONS GETS TO SEE GOD WINNING HIS CHILDREN BACK, EVERY SINGLE DAY!



Has this video changed / added to your understanding of confession in any way? What struck you the most from Fr Mike's explanation?

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## Now Read Luke 3:1-6



In this Gospel passage, we hear about Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, who lived a radical and unconventional lifestyle in response to a personal call by God to prepare the way for the Messiah. John understood that a genuine conversion of heart would be necessary to really accept the Messiah' message. He wanted people to repent and believe, to prepare a way for the Messiah. In the Catholic tradition, one of the most beautiful and healing sacraments is the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession. It is a chance to take stock of our lives, see what is going well and not so well, see what is hindering us from drawing close to God and what we need forgiveness for. God's mercy is freely available to us. He doesn't just offer to mend our broken hearts: He puts a new heart in us each time we go to confession, and strengthens us so we can follow the path to Heaven again!



### MISSION!

TAKE SOME TIME OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS OR WEEKS TO MAKE A GOOD EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE. ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE YOU AS YOU TRY TO REMEMBER ANY AREAS OF YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU FAILED IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, OTHERS OR YOURSELF; TIMES WHERE YOU FAILED TO SHOW LOVE OR DELIBERATELY IGNORED GOD'S WILL OR GUIDANCE FOR YOUR LIFE. FIND OUT WHEN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH HAS CONFESSIONS AND DECIDE TO GO. YOU CAN PRAY FOR THE PRIEST IN ADVANCE TOO!



### PRAYER TIME!

#### ACT OF SORROW:

O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins; for not loving others and not loving You. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen



## CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON FORGIVENESS AND HEALING



- [From the Inside Out \(Hillsong\)](#)
- [Prepare the Way \(Charlie Hall\)](#)
- [Thank You \(Jesus Army\)](#)
- [Lord have mercy \(MW Smith\)](#)
- [All who are thirsty \(Brenton Brown\)](#)
- [Here's my heart Lord \(David Crowder\)](#)
- [Misericordias Domini \(Taize\)](#)
- [O Come to the Altar \(Elevation Worship\)](#)

Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



Making a Good Confession  
Fr Mike Schmitz



How do I go to  
Confession? ODB Films



Examination of Conscience  
(NET USA)



CHECK OUT THE  
 CATECHISM OF THE  
 CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS  
 ABOUT THE IMMACULATE  
 CONCEPTION  
 CCC 490-493



# The Immaculate Conception

As the moon shines with  
 the light of the sun, so the  
 immaculate splendour of  
 Mary is totally relative to  
 that of the Redeemer.  
 Pope John Paul II



WHAT FEAST DAY DO WE CELEBRATE ON 25TH MARCH, NINE MONTHS BEFORE CHRISTMAS DAY?

ON DECEMBER 8TH WE CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. IS THIS JESUS' OR MARY'S CONCEPTION?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION"  
 (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



- What do most people think the dogma of the Immaculate Conception is about?

**DEFINITION:** The Immaculate Conception means that from the very first moment of her conception, Mary was preserved from all stain of O \_\_\_\_\_ S \_\_\_\_\_ by the merits of her Son's future I \_\_\_\_\_, d \_\_\_\_\_ and r \_\_\_\_\_.

- Who is Mary's Saviour? \_\_\_\_\_

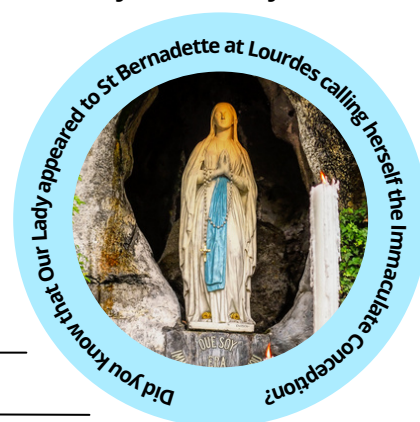


- Explain Fr Mike's **Dr Joe Johnson cure / vaccine analogy** in your own words. What are the two ways he could be seen as a "saviour"?

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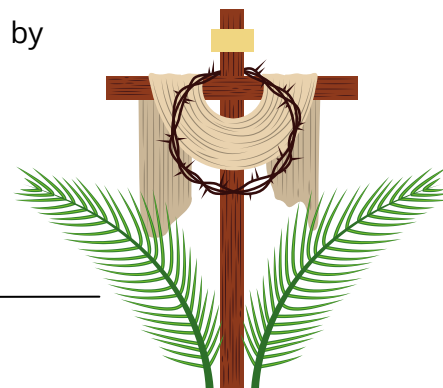
- Christians are saved by Jesus at baptism, and continue to be saved by saying \_\_\_\_\_. This happened *after the fact* of Original Sin being inherited.
- Mary was preserved by the \_\_\_\_\_ of her Son's \_\_\_\_\_ life, death and resurrection.
- What age was Mary believed to have been when she conceived Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_



**But...**

- How can this special grace Mary received apply to the past - if she received this grace years before Jesus' life, death and resurrection?
- Answer:** God is outside of \_\_\_\_\_.

- ASCEND YOUTH MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -



# THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

- We can read about The Fall in Genesis Chapter \_\_\_\_.
- Jesus and Mary were the first man and woman conceived without original sin? ☐ True ☐ False
- Jesus is the New \_\_\_\_\_ and Mary is the New \_\_\_\_\_.

## TEAM FALL:



An Angel of Light  
(\_\_\_\_\_) came to a woman conceived without sin and spoke words to her which caused her to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

She says \_\_\_\_\_ to God.

She takes that \_\_\_\_\_ and hands it on to her \_\_\_\_\_ who hands it on to the whole world.

EVE IS THE MOTHER OF THE \_\_\_\_\_

## TEAM REDEEM:

An Angel of Light  
(\_\_\_\_\_) came to a woman conceived without sin and spoke words to her which caused her to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

She says \_\_\_\_\_ to God's message and \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

She takes that \_\_\_\_\_ and hands it on to the \_\_\_\_\_ conceived in her womb. He says \_\_\_\_\_ and hands on \_\_\_\_\_ to the whole world.

MARY IS THE MOTHER OF THE \_\_\_\_\_



## But...

Why would God choose Mary to be part of his plan for salvation and cause her to be immaculately conceived?

- Answer: God **could** have saved us completely on His own, but God **chose** to use Mary!
- St Augustine said, "The God who willed to create you without you is not willing to redeem you without you." God wants us to work with Him.
- Where did Mary's power / goodness / strength come from? \_\_\_\_\_



**MISSION!**

GOD WILL NEVER ASK YOU TO DO MORE THAN HE ASKED OUR LADY, THE GREATEST SAINT IN HEAVEN. ALL HE ASKED OF HER WAS THAT SHE SAY "YES". TODAY, SAY "YES" TO WHATEVER GOD WANTS OF YOU - TRUSTING THAT HE HAS YOUR MAXIMUM HAPPINESS IN HIS PLAN. ASK OUR LADY FOR HELP TO BE OBEDIENT TO THE WILL OF GOD AND TO BELIEVE IN HIS FATHERLY HEART AND LOVE FOR YOU!



**PRAYER TIME!**

When Mary appeared to St Catherine Labouré at Rue du Bac in Paris in 1830, she asked for a medal to be created, with this prayer: "**O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you!**" The prayer prepared the way for the Marian dogma being declared in 1854, and four years later Our Lady appeared at Lourdes, calling herself "The Immaculate Conception"



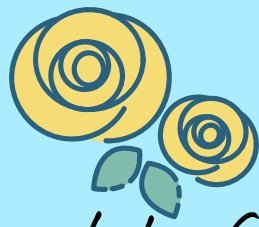
**CREATE A PLAYLIST OF MARIAN SONGS (SONGS ABOUT OUR LADY!)**



Ave Maria Guarani (Teen Spirit)  
Ave Maria Bach Guonod

Ave Maria Schubert  
Blessed One (Aaron Thompson)

Tu Pureza  
Hail Holy Queen (Sister Act)



# The Immaculate Conception

*Find all the words associated with the Immaculate Conception in the word-search*

P W S C C X F W N L P O Z D G E K L C M D I M Q M  
D Q N B O K N K Y E I Q Q E Z J M Y X A D Q Z A D  
H R K H C N D N A V D F R A G M S E J D X Z D E L  
X E I M M A C U L A T E E T P U I X N A O A V O M  
X F Q J W N Y E Z E S L F H Y A T F J D W R U V G  
N I A T S I I V P U I V H O O Y P W U E E R Y T D  
P C A N U R F S R T R R K D N O A M N S D M A K I  
K U X G F O H R L D I V B U N E B L E E F H N R I  
H L F R O A E L F A O O Q A X Y D R S F O E G T P  
B G S G B C X R B D N H N H G N P R O O O D E V T  
P S N Q T I O R U J C I B Q V Z D P A B R N V S D  
D E Y I K N H J A B S C G E T N O Z C G N V I S A  
V E O R J X T B T M V H Y I M I G A V R K S V X L  
Z N C F B R C S P G V W Y M R S M O P P E Y S Q Y  
C P S E C A B U D E U R Z K Z O A J Y N H A X R A  
E R J K M T A N N U N C I A T I O N E T L Q B M I  
J E S U S B H U L V Q O N R R U U G I V K U P Q D  
A D N U J J E E B G N S P N I A K W A M E R I T S  
H E N R L Q V R F E C K H Z B S Z T A A Q Q X O V  
O E O D I H V B W A W U F L D A I F F R Z X F H Y  
H M W X Y H I Q B T L Q G A O O K D N Y B Z V F S  
D E G H W V M Q E G F L R Z N R A H P A E V E B B  
H D W P V R D K E D P G H H A R F W E Y R L P F H  
K P Q L L O R G Q L N M G P C P Y H U E N U O J F  
X X S E E Q B Q U L Z L P K R H I J O V E L V P E



**Adam / annunciation / baptism / conception / death / December / dogma /  
eve / Gabriel / Garden of Eden / Genesis / immaculate / Jesus / life /  
 Lourdes / Lucifer / Mary / merits / New Adam / Original Sin / preserved /  
redeemed / resurrection / Rue du Bac / salvation / stain / The Fall**

## QUICK FIRE QUIZ!

Choose at least ten of the words / phrases in the list above and work as a team to explain how they relate to the Catholic belief in the Immaculate Conception as quickly as you can. Who can explain the most words?







CLICK HERE TO LEARN  
MORE ABOUT THE  
SYMBOLISM OF THIS  
IMAGE.

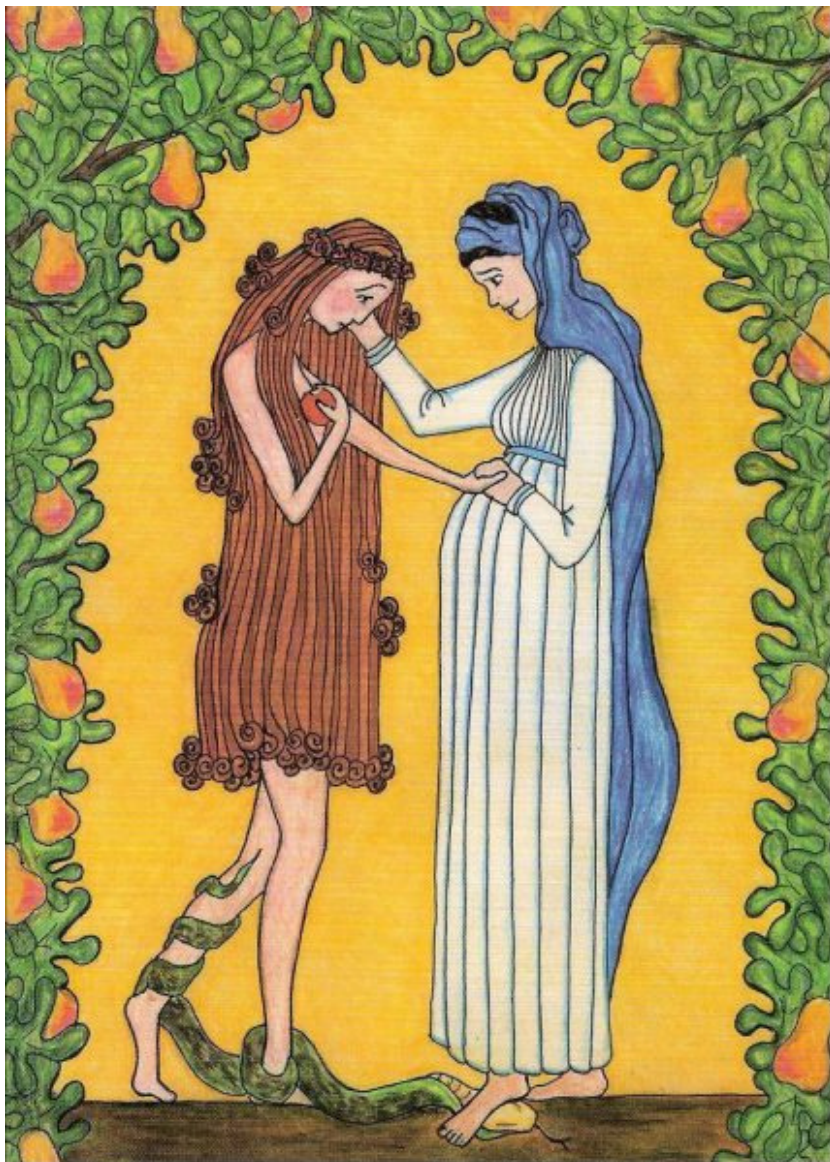


"O Mary conceived  
without sin, pray for  
us who have  
recourse to you!"

by Sr. Grace Remington, OCSO, of the Cistercian Sisters of the Mississippi Abbey

# The New Eve

## STUDY THIS PENCIL & CRAYON DRAWING OF MARY COMFORTING EVE



1. What strikes you first about this image? What questions does it raise in your mind?

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2. Notice that Eve is looking downwards - what emotion do you think she is expressing?

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3. What is Our Lady's face expressing?

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4. Why do you think Mary is trying to lift Eve's gaze?

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5. Eve is holding fruit with her left hand. What "fruit" is Our Lady leading her other hand to?

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6. What is wrapped around Eve's feet? What might this mean?

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7. What is Our Lady's left foot doing? What does this symbolise?

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8. What kind of light surrounds both women in this image? What could this represent?

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9. Based on your understanding of the Immaculate Conception, summarise what this drawing tries to teach us about Eve and the New Eve (Mary)?

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