Lesson 24 - Opening Thoughts on Feast of the Immaculate Conception:

“Nothing will be impossible for God.” Luke 1:37

At the moment of our conception, our parents create our physical body and God creates and infuses our soul. Due to Adam & Eve’s sin, we receive the stain of original sin and are separated from God until, in baptism, we receive the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, who cleanses and redeems us through Christ’s merits.

A person is truly conceived when the soul is created and infused into the body. Mary was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin at the first moment of her animation, and sanctifying grace was given to her before sin could have taken effect in her soul. Original sin was not removed from her soul as ours is removed at baptism. Original sin was excluded; it was never in her soul.

Simultaneously, through the state of original sanctity, innocence, and justice was conferred upon her, by which gift every stain and fault, and all depraved emotions, passions and debilities, which come from original sin, were excluded. However, she was not exempt from the temporal penalties of Adam, which is sorrow, bodily infirmities and death.

We profess Mary was untouched by human sin so she becomes the only perfect intercessor. It is through Mary we receive Jesus Christ, He who is the bridegroom of the Church. The Church, as His bride, is without spot or wrinkle.

God, you preserved the most Blessed Virgin Mary from all stain of original sin, so that in her, endowed with the rich fullness of your grace, you might prepare a worthy Mother for your Son and signify the beginning of the Church, his beautiful Bride without spot or wrinkle.

She the most pure Virgin was to bring forth a Son, the innocent Lamb who would wipe away our offenses; you placed her above all others to be for your people an advocate of grace and a model of holiness.

At the moment of her conception Mary was filled with God’s Grace; filled with Christ her redeemer. At the moment of conception, she was already perfectly formed in Christ’s image and likeness. The rest of humanity must repent, be converted and transformed into Christ’s image and likeness each day until death and judgment arrives.

“Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed are you among women!” We honor Mary’s Immaculate Conception with every Hail Mary of the Rosary.
Closing Thoughts on Feast of the Immaculate Conception:

Mary was prepared as a worthy dwelling place, conceived without the stain of original sin, so she would be a perfect temple for the incarnation of God’s only son, Jesus.

The free and happy relationship between Mary and God was not broken by the original sin of Adam & Eve, who lost their happy relationship in the Garden. Mary can intercede for us so we may be cleansed and purified by God’s grace and admitted into God’s presence when we are obedient and free of our sin.

God revealed his plan of salvation. Whatever God wills, he works effectively and surely to accomplish. Don’t be like Satan and his followers. It is wise for us to make God’s will our will. We are baptized in Jesus Christ and cleansed of our sins by the infusion of the grace of the Holy Spirit; we are made a son of the Father and a brother of Christ. We enter into a free and happy relationship with God when we stay obedient to His will and way, like Mary, the first and most perfect disciple.

“The Eucharist helps heal in us the wounds of that fault (sin) from which, in a singular way, you preserved Blessed Mary in her Immaculate Conception.

Pure of Heart and Immaculate of soul, Mary was free of fault and could say “Yes” to God’s will. That is our ultimate goal as well. When we embrace God’s message (will) for us, we like Mary will have no further questions, fear or anxiety.

What keeps us from that state of purity of heart and soul? Suspicion, self-centeredness, cynicism, pride, and false humility – these and more can cloud our reasoning and make it hard for us to surrender to God’s plan.

Nothing is impossible for God because his Love (The Holy Spirit) is without limits.

The Holy Spirit is the force of love that accomplishes all things for the Father through Jesus Christ. He is the living force acting in the Church.

Where you may see only your sins and failings, God sees your heart. He knows you’re not immaculate, but he also knows how much you want to love and be loved. He knows how much you want to do what is right, like Mary. He knows all of your dreams, needs and hopes. Nothing is impossible for Him – not even giving you the deepest desires of your heart!

Let us say “Yes” to our Lord. Let everything be done to me according to your will. Nothing is impossible for your love, not even my happiness.
How do you see the Holy Spirit active in the development of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception?

He is active in the scripture references which infer but do not declare the Immaculate Conception. He is active in the writings of the patristic fathers who all believe in Mary’s purity and freedom from sin. The Holy Spirit prompts them to develop two key points: Mary’s absolute purity and her position as the second Eve. He sanctifies Jeremiah and St. John the Baptist in their mother’s womb because through preaching, they have a special part to play in preparing the way for the Lord. The Holy Spirit, acting through the Magisterium, guides the church through the controversies over the celebration of the feast. Finally, after 1,800 years, it is the Holy Spirit speaking through the seat of Peter that declares the belief a dogma of the faith. The church is always in a process of change and conversion. The Holy Spirit eventually corrects all errors by using Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium.

What is Sensus Fidelium and how does it make the Roman Catholic Church different?

The Pope mentioned that among the criteria of Catholic theology, the document mentions the attention theologians should reserve for the 'sensus fidelium'. "Vatican Council II, confirming the specific and irreplaceable role of the Magisterium, emphasized that the People of God as a whole participate in Christ's prophetic role. ... This gift, the 'sensus fidei', constitutes in believers a sort of supernatural instinct which shares a vital connaturality with the very object of faith. ... It is a criterion for ascertaining whether or not a certain truth belongs to the living depository of the apostolic tradition. It also has a proactive value as the Holy Spirit never ceases to speak of the Church and to guide her towards the fullness of truth. Nowadays, however, it is particularly important to specify the criteria which permit the authentic 'sensus fidei' to be distinguished from its imitations. This is not in fact a form of ecclesial public opinion, and it would be unthinkable to refer to it to challenge the teachings of the Magisterium, since the 'sensus fidei' cannot truly develop in a believer other than to the extent to which he participates fully in the life of the Church, and it therefore necessitates responsible adhesion to her Magisterium".

"Nowadays, this supernatural sense of the faith of believers leads to a vigorous reaction against the prejudice according to which religions, and in particular monotheistic religions, are intrinsically predisposed to violence, especially on the pretext that they lay claim to a universal truth. Some maintain that only a 'polytheism of values' would guarantee tolerance and civil peace by conforming to the spirit of a pluralistic democratic society. ... On the one hand, it is important to remember that faith in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, meets the rational demands of metaphysical reflection, which is not weakened, but rather strengthened and deepened by the Revelation of the mystery of the Triune God. On the other hand, it is necessary to emphasise the form that the definitive Revelation of the mystery of the Triune God takes in the life and death of Jesus Christ, led unto the cross like 'a lamb that is led to the slaughter'. The Lord offers a radical refusal of any form of hate or violence in favor of the absolute primacy of agape. While throughout history there have been or indeed there are forms of violence carried out in the name of God, these cannot be attributed to monotheism, but rather to historical causes, and in particular to human error. It is, rather, an oblivion to God that immerses human society in a form of relativism, which ineluctably generates violence. Once the possibility of referring to a form of objective truth is negated to all, dialogue becomes impossible and violence, whether declared or concealed, becomes the rule governing human
relations. Without opening up to the transcendent, which enables us to find answers to our questions on the meaning of life and how to live in a moral fashion, man becomes incapable of acting with justice or committing himself to peace”.

"If the rupture in man's relations with God brings with it a profound imbalance in relations within mankind itself, reconciliation with God brought about by Christ on the Cross, 'our peace', is the fundamental source of unity and fraternity", continued the Holy Father. "This also links to your discussion on the social doctrine of the Church within the doctrine of the faith as a whole. It confirms that social doctrine is not an extrinsic addition but, without neglecting the contribution of a healthy social philosophy, draws its basic principles from the same source as faith. This doctrine renders effective, in the great variety of social situations, the new commandment that the Lord Jesus gave to us: 'Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another'”.

How do you see the Holy Spirit actively working in Christ’s church today?