



## The Illustrated IC by Joe Sixpack

Jesus was walking along one day, when He came upon a group of people surrounding a lady of ill repute. It was obvious that the crowd was preparing to stone her, so Jesus made His now-famous statement, "Let the person who has no sin cast the first stone."

The crowd was shamed and one by one began to turn away. All of a sudden, a lovely little woman made her way through the crowd. Finally getting to the front, she tossed a pebble towards the woman.

Jesus looks over and says, "I really hate it when you do that, Mom."

Yeah, more humor this week, but it serves to sort of put a modern spin on a 2000 year old truth. The greatest privilege ever given to a human person was the divine maternity, and that couldn't have first happened without Mary's Immaculate Conception.

If you ask a Protestant, particularly a Fundamentalist, if anyone ever came into the world with sin, they'll be quick to tell you that Jesus was. That's very true. But if you try to tell them that Jesus' mother, Mary, was also sinless, the first thing they will do is take you to Romans 3:23:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." According to them, "all" means everyone except Jesus.



That may seem to most Catholics like a great place to drop out of the conversation, but it shouldn't. I don't have the space here to give a thorough apologetic on Mary's Immaculate Conception (and there is a great answer to "all"), but I'll give you enough here so you can better understand it yourself and maybe cause a non-Catholic to think about it. Once you better understand, the easier it will become to learn how to defend this dogma.

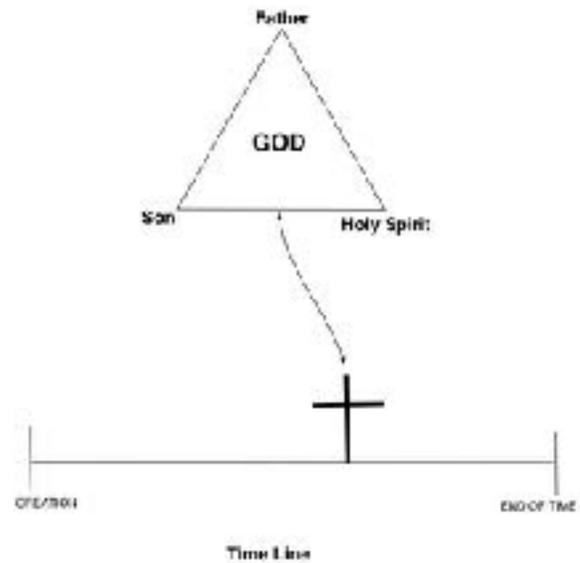


Because Jesus is God and could have no sin, and since the stain of original sin is passed to all human descendants, it was necessary for the

Blessed Virgin Mary to be preserved from original sin. This made her a pure vessel, a worthy Ark of the New Covenant. So you may better understand how God accomplished the Immaculate Conception, let's take a look at the illustrations and commentary.

Let's start with the timeline on the previous page.

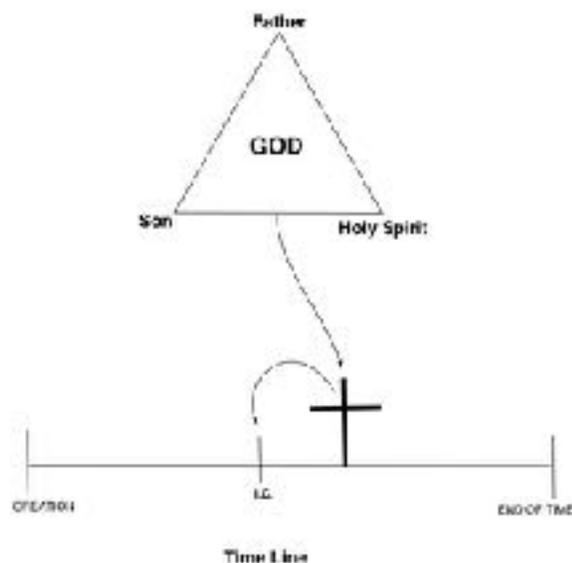
First, you'll notice that the human race has a beginning and an end, just as each individual life has a beginning and an end. On the left end of the line is the creation of the universe, and on the right is the apocalypse, or end of time. The line itself represents all of human history.



Above the timeline is a representation of God. From His vantage point, since He is not bound by the limitations of time, space and dimension, God sees all of human history from the beginning to the end, and all at the same instant. Because He is infinite, there is no time for Him. He sees our history, our present, and our future all at the same time. This means that he also sees His Son's crucifixion and death as they happen.

It was on the cross that Jesus redeemed us. He won for us the graces to become heirs of heaven by the shedding of His blood. All human persons are dependent on Christ's redeeming death for the possibility of salvation, even Mary.

God looked down and saw the redemptive act of the cross at the same time He saw the conception of Mary in her mother's womb. In a manner of speaking, God reached down to His Son's cross and took some of the graces Jesus earned for us. Then He applied those graces to Mary's soul (IC) at the same instant He created it, and then He infused it into her newly conceived body. This is how Jesus was given a perfectly clean vessel in which to grow as He came into the world. This privilege God gave to Mary is the Immaculate Conception.



That makes the Immaculate Conception pretty simple to understand, doesn't it? Well, now you know What We Believe... Why We Believe It.

Still not clear, or you have there Catholic questions? Don't hesitate to go to my website, [JoeSixpackAnswers.com](http://JoeSixpackAnswers.com). I'll be happy to answer any Catholic question you have!