

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

THE VIRGIN MARY UNDEFILED AND SCANDALS...

The late Archbishop Fulton Sheen once told a story about a retreat he gave to a thousand prisoners in a maximum security prison out in California. All the inmates naturally thought he was the "good guy" and that they were the "bad guys." So the bishop began his talk this way. He said, "I just want you to know there is one big difference between you and me. You got caught but I didn't!" How true! When we stop to think it over we realize that none of us are sinless; that all of us have "messed up" in some way or another during this life. In fact the only human person who never was "messed up" by sin and it's imperfections was the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This Wednesday, August 15th, we celebrate one of Mary's greatest feasts-the Assumption into heaven. Pope Pius XII who proclaimed this Dogma of the Church in 1950, described what it means: "the Immaculate Mother of God., the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." Yes, Mary is the immaculate one. "Immaculate" really means not stained. She was never stained with original sin or actual sin. As we assess the condition of our society today, it could be said that perhaps some people might think they are "immaculately conceived" too because they don't really believe they are sinners! But we should know better.

All of us have "feet of clay" and while we are capable of a great deal of good, it's possible for us to also commit great evil. In this regard, just think for a moment about the recent sexual scandal involving the Archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. I was really devastated by it all. I had come to know the Cardinal in my years at Sacred heart. He had family in the parish and would often visit to celebrate Mass and other sacraments. That such a high official in the church should act out in such a way and not be corrected is incomprehensible. There is a great deal of sin in the church but also a great deal of goodness. Bishops and priests are called to holiness, but sometimes there are catastrophic failures. At times we Catholics tend to look at high prelates in the church and because of their office, confer on them too much of an exalted status.

The point is that we should look more to Christ, the Blessed Mother and the saints as role models in the pursuit of holiness and Christian perfection. Mary is our role model par excellence in this endeavor. She shows us what our poor human nature could become if we truly are holy and cooperate with God's grace. As we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption this week, let us look to the "star" who is Mary. If we keep our eyes fixed on her, we shall not go astray.

*Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome*