

The Birth of the Theotokos and the Immaculate Conception

If you missed my sermon on Thursday, I want to offer you the best argument for the Immaculate Conception I know of. Paul Haffner gave me inspiration in his work, "The Mystery of Mary". Luke 1:28 reads, "Hail, thou that have been made full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." The word *kecharitomene* (translated "full of grace") is a perfect passive participle. The passive denotes the action of God towards Mary. In other words, He made her full of grace. The verb root itself, *charitoun*, denotes "change of something in the person or thing affected." The perfect participle shows that the action has taken place in the past; thus, "The action of the grace of God has already brought about the change." Now, God Himself is grace. Grace is not some thing God grabs from a bowl and gives us. It [He] is the Holy Spirit. This kind of action of grace is explained elsewhere as the kind that graces through the redemption of Christ's blood (Eph. 1:7) (pp. 56-57). The "Perfect participle, enhances the image of the perfect and lasting [the normal meaning of a perfect participle] grace which implies fullness" (58). This means Mary was made full of grace/God at a point before Gabriel's announcement. Mary is full of God because of what Jesus did for her on the cross, and this happened to Mary before she even heard about the gospel, so Mary received God's redemptive grace when? Probably from the beginning, at her conception. After all, we know she was without sin, she was perfect. She had to be. She was the temple of Jesus. Thus, the Immaculate Conception. Oh Panagia, you are more honorable than the Seraphim and beyond compare more glorious than the Cherubim."