NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (https://www.ncronline.org)

Dec. 8, The Immaculate Conception

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Dec. 8, 2009 NCR Today

The full title of today's feast is the Solemnity of The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

> "From the very beginning, and before time began, the eternal Father chose and prepared for his only-begotten Son a Mother in whom the Son of God would become incarnate and from whom, in the blessed fullness of time, he would be born into this world. Above all creatures did God so loved her that truly in her was the Father well pleased with singular delight. Therefore, far above all the angels and all the saints so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of his divinity that this mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater, and which, outside of God, no mind can succeed in comprehending fully."
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> --*Ineffabilis Deus,* [1] Apostolic Constitution issued by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854

From an article [2] on "Maximus's Mary: A Minister, Not Just an Icon", by the late Sally Cunneen, in the current issue of *Commonweal:*

"Could the Mother of Jesus have had a greater role in the mission, Passion, and Resurrection of her son than the evangelists tell us? Could women have been important church leaders in early Christianity? The earliest complete biography of the Virgin, by the Byzantine theologian St. Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662), takes such things for granted. After centuries of neglect, his seventh-century Life of the Virgin became available in a 1986 French translation by Michel van Esbroeck. Its effect is to radically change our understanding of Mary?s earthly role."

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[1] http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9ineff.htm
[2] http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/article.php3?id_article=2721