Hail Mary, Gentle Woman

Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.
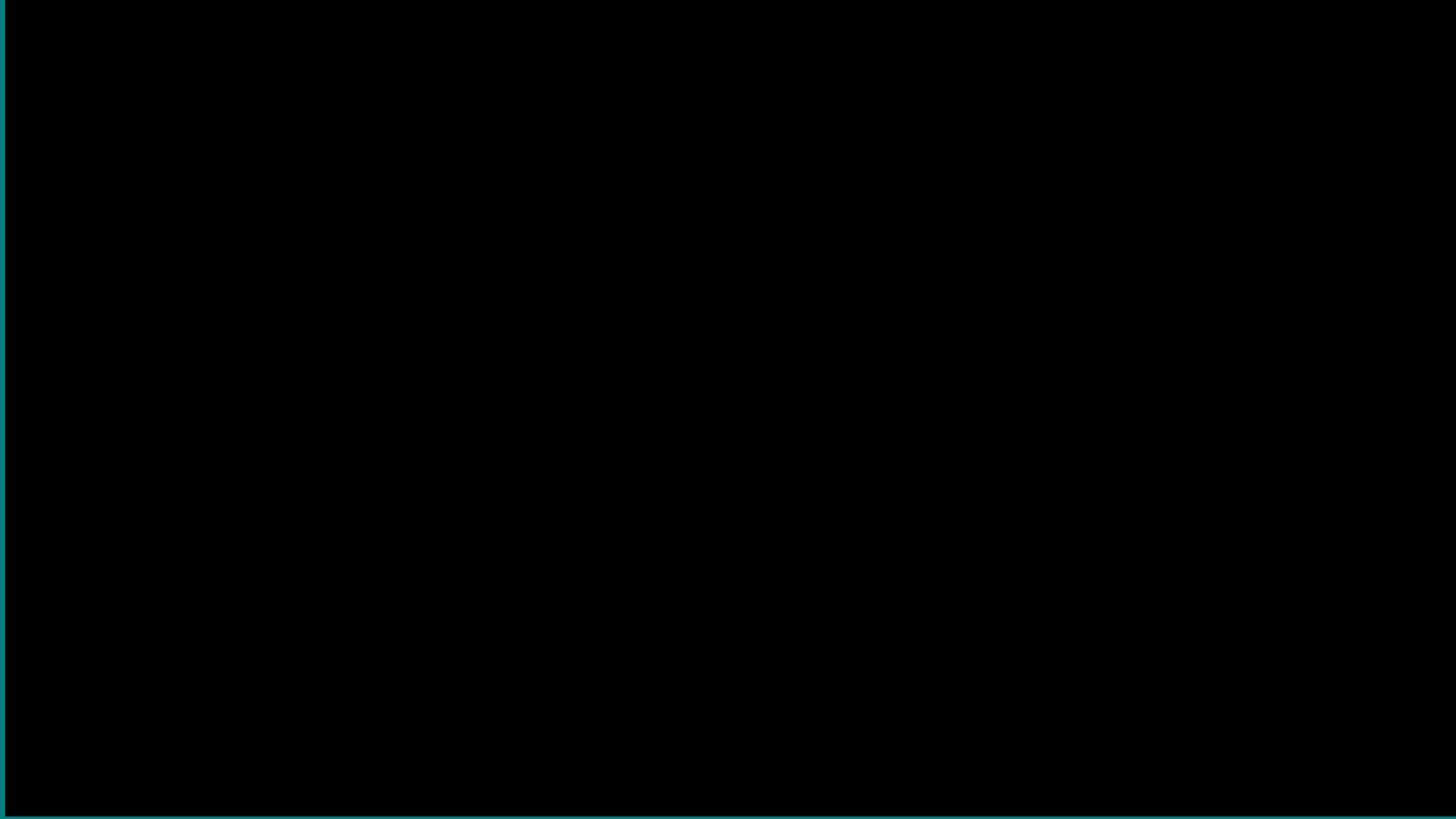
Immaculate Conception

What does this video tell us about Mary?

What else do we know about her?

Before we begin…

Immaculate Conception

Mary is so special to the Church that there are a number of feast days dedicated to her throughout the year. *Can you name any of the Marian feasts?*

To dedicate Saturday in honour of Mary is an ancient custom. The First Saturdays Devotion, to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was requested by Our Lady herself for the reparation of sins.

The feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is celebrated nine days after Corpus Christi in June, but is a different feast day than the Immaculate Conception.

Mary is a Mediatrix, an intercessor between us and her son, Jesus. We do not worship Mary as all worship is for God alone. Instead, we pray through Mary who leads us to Christ.

How can Mary intercede for you?

While the feast of Mary's conception is celebrated on 8th December, Jesus' conception is celebrated on the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25, nine months before Christmas. In order to become the mother of Christ Mary was conceived free from the burden of original sin.

What was Mary's response in this story? What can we learn from her?

Image from Catholic Icing

Every year Catholics celebrate the Solemnity of the **Immaculate Conception on** December 8.

Many Catholics believe this feast celebrates Jesus' conception through the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. However, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception celebrates **Mary's** conception in the womb of Saint Anne, Mary's mother, without the stain of original sin.

Notice that in this picture St Anne and Mary have their back to the tree. *Why do you think this is?*

'Have you been eating of the tree I forbade you to eat? The man replied, 'It was the woman you put with me; she gave me the fruit and I ate it.' (Gen 3)

In the first reading today we hear how Eve brought original sin into the world as she disobeyed God.

In contrast, Mary was born without original sin, unlike the rest of us. She turned her back on sin and rejected evil. She is filled with God's grace and love. Mary is the new Eve.

'Before the world was made, he chose us…to be holy and spotless, and to live through love…' (Eph 1:3-6)

Today's second reading tells us how God has chosen each of us to be holy. He chose Mary from the beginning of time as the mother of Jesus. She was spotless, immaculate and pure, perfectly fitting to carry God's only son.

How can you be holy and spotless like Mary?

Mary was the very first tabernacle as she was the first vessel to hold Our Lord. A tabernacle is a fixed or moving dwelling place in which the Lord resides and so it is very sacred.

Mary is known as '*Theotokos*' which means '*God-bearer*'.
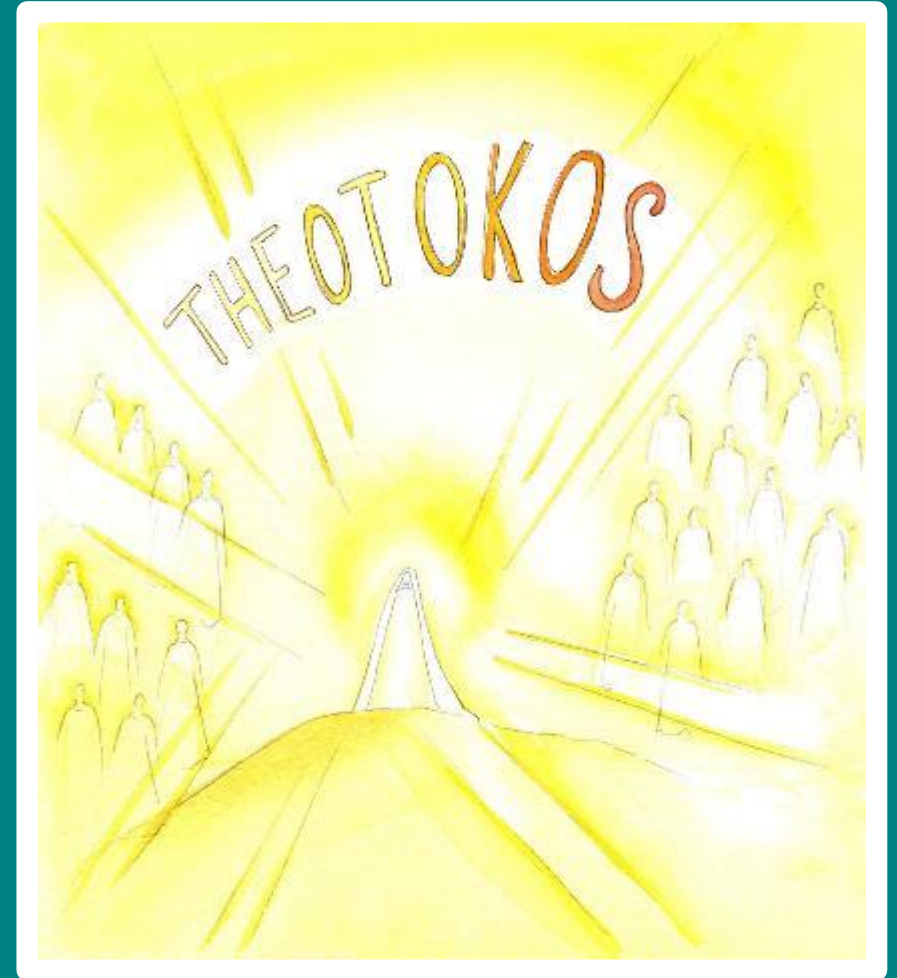
How can you carry God to others?

Let us pray

We pray to God through Mary:

- For all those expecting babies…
- For migrants and refugees…
- For an openness to the Word of God…
- For those who have lost hope…
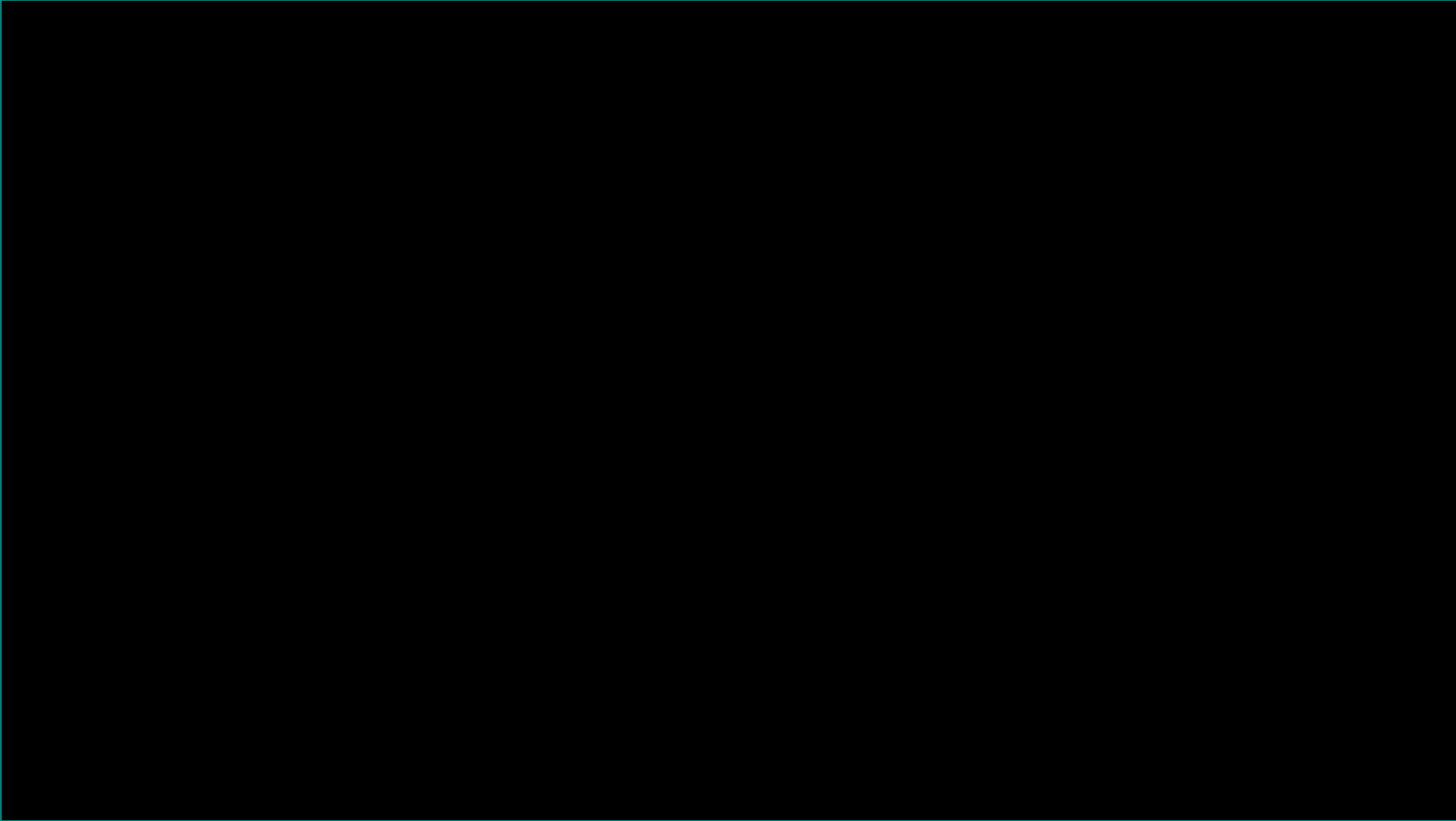- For our personal needs and intentions…

Mary our mother, pray for us.

The Hail Mary…

It begins with the words of the angel Gabriel during the Annunciation: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you…

The words from her cousin Elizabeth at the Visitation then follow: Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb

Let us say this prayer together reflecting on these special words and asking Mary for her help at this time.

Hail Mary

Mary's heart was filled with love and gladness.

When she visited her cousin Elizabeth, she praised God in her song: The Magnificat (Holy is his name)

Create your own prayer/song of praise

Mission

With thanks to the following schools for their images:

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Thanks