

# THE IMMACULATA



## Signs of A Bad Woman by St Vincent Ferrer

Because he was prudent and wise he considered all the signs of a bad woman, which are:

- 1) **an irreligious heart,**
- 2) **talkativeness in speech,**
- 3) **personal untidiness,**
- 4) **gluttony in eating and drinking,**
- 5) **laziness toward work,**
- 6) **vanity of dress,** and
- 7) **contempt for her husband.**

*Each of these signs indicate a woman is bad. But Joseph found none of these signs in the Virgin Mary. Rather, the total opposite; all the signs of a good woman.*

1) The first sign of a dishonourable woman is an **irreligious heart** toward God, disregarding masses and sermons, because she does not fear God. May God keep her from being inconsiderate, because unless a woman retains a fear of God, no other fear will hold her back from evil.

*Joseph however was thinking about his fiancée whether she was devout, or irreligious, and he saw that he had never seen such a holy and devout woman, because she always wanted to pray, or read, or contemplate. "The woman that fears [God], she shall be praised."*

2) The second sign is **talkativeness**. God keep her from the opportunity. Reason, because no devotion remains in the soul from words, just as no scent remains in the nutmeg jar which is left open. "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection," otherwise it is a bad sign. But a quiet woman is good.

*Note the signs of reserve of the Blessed Virgin, because she is painted with her eyes larger than her mouth, and so she is properly represented to indicate that she had a great eye of the heart for thinking and contemplating, but a mouth small for speaking little. Mary "kept all these words in her heart".*

3) The third sign is **personal untidiness**. When a woman goes about, lascivious, dissolute and vulgar, it seems that she has ants on her feet. Ambrose: A man's body is an image of his soul. So Solomon says, "A woman [meets him] in harlot's attire prepared to deceive souls; talkative and wandering, not bearing to be quiet, not able to abide still at home, now abroad, now in the streets, now lying in wait near the corners."

*But Joseph did not find this sign in the Blessed Virgin, because she never left home, unless when she went to the temple. And thus she went about totally composed. She always had her eyes toward the ground in a gesture of holiness. She never went dancing, but went about with downcast eyes.*

4) The fourth sign is **gluttony**, stuffing the belly with

food and drink. Hence a full belly immediately stimulates its neighbour, and because of this a gluttonous person necessarily is lustful.

*But the Virgin Mary ate very little, only enough to sustain the body. She was almost always fasting.*

5) The fifth sign is **laziness**, as when some woman says, "I will not work. I have brought so much from my dowry to my husband." Therefore St. Bernard writes, "Idleness is the mother of trifles, the stepmother of virtues," so because our body is of the earth, it has the conditions of the earth, which if left uncultivated, brings forth thorns of lust, and weeds of bad thoughts and sins. Idleness has taught much evil."

*But the Virgin was never lazy, rather she was always busy about holy works. Jerome says that she would arise in the middle of the night and pray. Then she spun and wove.*

6) Sixth is **vanity and excess in dress**. Women may dress themselves decently and honestly according to their status and condition, but when they pour all their time and zeal in dressing themselves, or their body and they don't care about their soul, God help them, because such women are vain and have a vain heart. So Scripture says, "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." Note the rule of the Apostle [Paul], "Women also in decent apparel: adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety, not with plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly attire, but as it becomes women professing godliness, with good works."

*But the Blessed Virgin did not care about jewellery. She washed her face well with the pure water of tears. St. Anne, her mother was adorning her with much jewellery. Out of love for her mother she wore it in the house, but not outside the house. But the daughters of today do just the opposite.*

7) The seventh sign is **contempt of the husband**. It is a sign that she has her heart for another, when she argues with her husband about fashion and about other things, she immediately wants him to get it for her. According to scriptures, a woman ought to honour her husband, and so the Apostle commands, saying, "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man: but to be in silence."

*Neither is this sign of contempt found in the glorious Virgin, because although she was young, beautiful, noble and rich, and her spouse old, and poor, nevertheless she honoured him more than any woman in the world. All in all Joseph found no sign of a bad woman in the Virgin Mary, but all the virtues and traits of a good woman.*

