



The painting above the altar is a reproduction of the Spanish painter Murillo's (1618-1682) painting of "**The Immaculate Conception of Soult**". The original painting, Murillo's most famous, may be based on a verse from the Book of Revelation "...and there appeared a great sign in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of 12 stars." This painting was donated to the parish by Miss Rosella O'Beirne (1869-1941). Church records indicate that Miss O'Beirne lived with her parents at 54 Pond St. in North Easton. The painting appears in our oldest photographs dating back to 1912, which leads us to believe it may have been installed in the church at the time of dedication in 1904.

As a child, this writer and friends often wondered how many cherubs (angels) are in the painting. Do you know? (The answer is..... 29!)

### ***The Immaculate Conception of Soult***

(La Inmaculada de Soult)

Painted: 1678.

ORIGINAL SIZE: 87.40"x 46.45"

One of Murillo's later works, being one of the most solid and achieved of this master. The majestic plastic feel is accentuated by the atmospheric density that surrounds the figures.

Curiosity: This painting was confiscated in 1813, by Napoleon's general "Soult", later returned to the Prado Museum in 1940, hence the name.

Murillo, in line with his affection for paintings of religious topics and devotion, consecrated for art history the representation of the Virgin as the Immaculate Conception. The so called "de Soult" is doubtlessly one of the most beautiful and famous of all those he painted. It gets its name from the French marshal who took it during the War of Independence from the chapel of Seville's Venerable Hospital, for which it was commissioned. It was not returned to Spain until 1940; it was kept at the Louvre Museum for almost the entirety of its absence. In these representations by Murillo, in which he consecrated the popular devotion to Mary's "spotless" conception, the Virgin is generally a young woman of great beauty dressed in a white tunic and blue cloak and surrounded of clouds whilst stepping on a serpent, or half-moon, the symbol of Lucifer when he enticed a certain other woman to sin in the early paradise of Eden. That was when God the Father warned the devil that. "a woman will crush your head".