

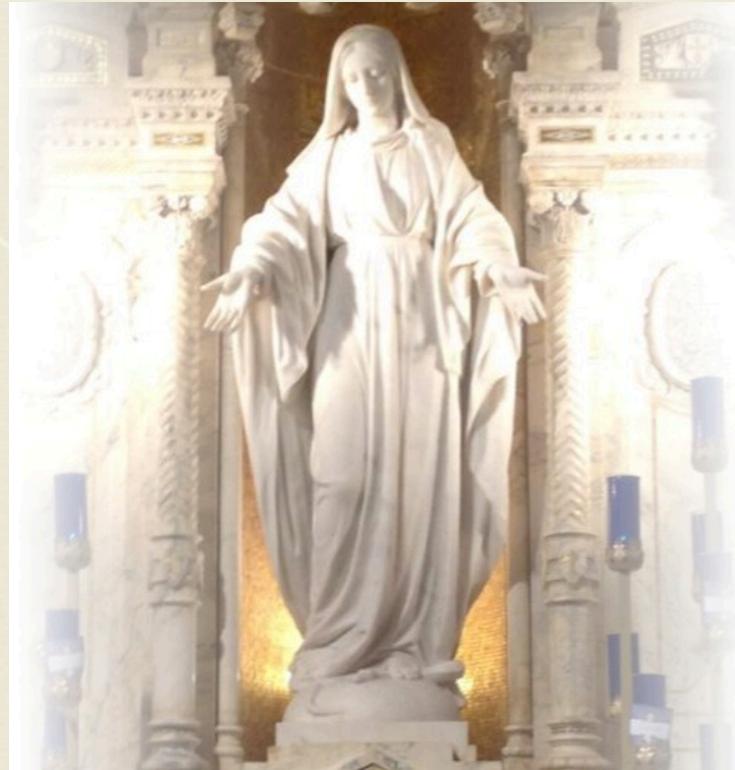
ACT by which the Congregation of the Mission renews the Consecration of itself to the Blessed Virgin on the Festival of Her Immaculate Conception

(Decree of the General Assembly held in 1843)

We, most unworthy priests, clerics and lay brothers of the Congregation of the Mission, having placed ourselves in the presence of God and of the whole court of Heaven, and being filled, O most Holy Virgin Mary, with the deepest veneration for that ineffable privilege of thy Immaculate Conception, and impressed with the liveliest gratitude towards thee for signal and innumerable favors which thou has unceasingly showered down upon our little Company. do now come, O Virgin Mary, our tender Mother, to renew to thee the consecration of each of its members, and of all the works which are confided to it.

This little Congregation already belongs entirely to thee, O most August Mother of Jesus; from its very cradle it was consecrated to thee; if it has grown up in the Church of God, and been the instrument of saving a multitude of souls, and thus sending to the mansions of eternal bliss so many who now bless and praise, and will forever praise, thy Divine Son, it has been under the shadow of thy maternal and powerful protection that such happy fruits have been produced. Thou hast taken care of this grain of mustard seed, which St. Vincent deposited in the earth under thy auspices; watered by the benedictions of Heaven, which have flowed upon it through thy merciful hands, it has grown up and become a great tree, and has spread far and wide its branches, laden with fruits of salvation. Hence, also, every year we lovingly gather around thy throne on the dawn of the Feast of thy Glorious Assumption, and repeat, in the joy of our hearts, the vows which our fathers constantly addressed to thee; we renew with our whole hearts the offering they made before us - an offering, cordial, universal and irrevocable, of our souls and bodies, a solemn consecration of ourselves to thy love and service during life and for all eternity.

But, O incomparable Queen of Angels and of men, new treasures of heavenly gifts have been poured out upon us; and we know that it is to thy tenderness and love that we owe them. Our Little Company had died away, and thou hast caused it to revive; it had disappeared amid the disasters of a most frightful revolution, and thou hast caused it to reappear, bearing impressed upon its brow the august seal of thy protection; its scattered members mourned in exile over its woes, thou hast gathered them together, that they might build up with their aged hands the house of the Father, and catch a



glimpse, when dying, of the new glories that were one day to surround the Company. They were filled with joy to hear the mysterious words, "that God would make use of the family of St. Vincent to re-animate the Faith". Soon the worthless Company spread and could say in her heart of her children: "Who hath begotten these? I was barren and destitute - how have I become, on a sudden, so fruitful?"

Legions of apostolic men, sprung from the bosom of the Company, have spread themselves to the remotest corners of the world; Asia, Africa and America have become, as well as Europe, the scene of their labors; the Arab and the Ethiopian, the Greek and the Barbarian, the heretic and the infidel, draw waters of salvation from the same source as the Levite and the poor inhabitants of our country districts. An additional privilege has just come to increase our joy and happiness; it has been given to the Company, not only to carry all over the universe the blood in

flames of Divine Love, but still more, to suffer for God, and to shed its blood in profession of the Faith. O Most Tender Mother, we know well that so many favors are the tokens of thy love; we delight to contemplate thee enthroned amid the splendors of Heaven, and showering down upon us in profusion the treasures of Divine Grace, of which thou art dispenser. Thou dost ever remember that thou art Our Lady and Queen, and that we are consecrated to thee without reserve.

O Queen, conceived without sin, we have chosen this Feast of thy Immaculate Conception as a fit day to recall the memory of so many benefits, and to offer to thee the solemn homage of our gratitude. This ineffable mystery has been, in these latter times, the pledge of thy protection towards us; it was from the family of St. Vincent that thou didst select the instrument which was to propagate over the world devotion to this happy day should be to us forever a monument of thy tenderness and of our gratitude.

O thou, who art our Sovereign Lady. reign over us, reign over the whole Company, regard it always as the object of thy protection; we confide it to thy maternal care; we confide to thee all the works of the Company, that thou mayest ever bless them; we confide to thee its dearest interest, that thou mayest ever guard them. We place it, in fine, in thy Immaculate Heart, as in a sanctuary, that it may be favored with the gifts of Heaven, and that herein, as in the tower of David, it may find a refuge from all the poisoned arrows of the world and the devil. Obtain for us, O Most August Protectress, the grace of loving thy Divine Son more and more, and of devoting ourselves entirely to the extension of His kingdom; obtain for us the grace to fill our hearts with the spirit of our holy Founder, to practice with fervor the virtues of simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification and zeal for the salvation of souls; engrave deeply in our hearts the love of poverty, chastity and obedience, and of our holy rules; obtain for us the grace to live together in holy union and great fervor, that we may all become, in whatever employment we may be engaged, true Apostles of Jesus Christ, and sincere imitators of thy virtues.

O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.