

MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

The Immaculate Conception Medal or Miraculous Medal



O, Mary Conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you!

January 2013

Dear Friend in Christ,

Thank you for your desire to promote the dignity and sanctity of human life as a Missionary Servant of the Gospel of Life. This desire reveals your deep appreciation for the life-giving mission and message that Jesus continues to speak through his Catholic Church today.

Serving as a missionary of life is serious business, because life is a serious enterprise that has supernatural and eternal consequences. It is understandable, therefore, that you commit yourself wholeheartedly to responding to the evil of the culture of death that dominates our modern society. In your response to evil, you choose to promote the Gospel of life in its fullness, by creatively sharing the liberating message that Christ wishes to impart to men, women and children in our day.

As Missionary Servants of the Gospel of Life and as Servants of the Gospel of Life, we share the same spirit and charism. We are called to give honor and glory to God through pro-life, pro-family ministries, prayer and sacrifice. In addition to these good works, let us commit ourselves to growth in holiness through ongoing conversion and renewal. As we strive to serve the Lord of Life, let us keep in mind that we are called to the heavenly kingdom where life is celebrated eternally in love.

In the Lord of Life,  
Sister Diane Carollo, S.G.L.

## **MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE GOSPEL OF LIFE**

### **SPIRIT AND CHARISM**

The Missionary Servants of the Gospel of Life embrace a spirit that is inspired by the example of St. Vincent de Paul, the apostle of Charity and missionary to the poor, marginalized and destitute. In serving the poor, he taught his disciples that Christ himself was being served.

The Servants of the Gospel of Life and their lay associates, the Missionary Servants of the Gospel of Life, have a special calling to serve the Church through evangelization, catechesis and works of mercy. In a special way, both branches of this evolving religious family are called to serve the poor and spiritually destitute in society.

Unlike material poverty, spiritual destitution is far more serious because it leaves the soul in a state of hopelessness. In our society today, spiritual destitution is prevalent in all age and ethnic groups, and among the rich and poor.

Spiritual destitution is characterized by that spiritual state in which individuals live their lives devoid of any real meaningful relationship with God. Such individuals often adopt sinful lifestyles and make choices that show ignorance or rejection of God's law, or indifference to their human dignity and eternal destiny.

Whether people are materially poor or spiritually impoverished, the missionary spirit of St. Vincent de Paul teaches us how to serve those most in need in the world. Through evangelization, catechesis and works of mercy we bring the liberating message of the Gospel of Life to all people.

In our service as religious and lay associates, we are called to entrust our lives to the Blessed Mother and follow in her footsteps of holiness. We consecrate ourselves to Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, and look to her as our Mother and Patroness in the spiritual life.

Through the example of our Blessed Mother's fidelity, humility, and submission to the will of the Father in all things, we find the path to the heart of our God. Through the example of her generous self-giving, life of prayer, total abandonment to the Providence of God and simplicity of life, we learn how to embrace the abundant life that is filled with happiness and peace. Through her example of courage at the foot of the cross, to her majestic place in the cenacle after the ascension of our Lord into heaven, we discover our own call to union with Christ that begins on earth and is consummated in heaven.

## **THE VINCENTIAN TRADITION OF SERVICE**

In the active apostolate, we strive to practice the five missionary virtues that St. Vincent de Paul urged his missionaries to embrace. With HUMILITY, SIMPLICITY, MEEKNESS, MORTIFICATION AND ZEAL we strive to enter into service armed with those virtues that make us most effective in announcing the coming of the kingdom of God. The practice of these virtues helps us to confront the culture of death and the challenges it presents.

### **WHAT DID ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SAY ABOUT THE FIVE MISSIONARY VIRTUES?**

#### **SIMPLICITY**

“Simplicity is, first of all, speaking the truth. It is saying things as they are, without concealing or hiding anything.”

##### **Reflection:**

Our world today is in need of the truth. Jesus taught that it is the truth that sets one free. We must speak the truth in love to those around us who suffer from the very choices they make which contradict God’s law and will.

“Simplicity consists in referring things to God alone, or purity of intention. In this sense simplicity is doing everything for the love God and for no other end.”

##### **Reflection:**

To engage in works for God alone requires self-emptying, dying to self and detachment. Though we do good and strive to serve the Lord, we continually need to purge ourselves of self-interest, self-love, and self-seeking. We are called to self-donation and self-giving following the example of our Lord.

“Simplicity involves an unadorned lifestyle that rejects superfluous things and possessions that are vain and useless.”

##### **Reflection:**

Consumerism, which plagues our modern society, reveals an excessive and unhealthy dependence on earthly goods. As a result, the spiritual component of life is often left in the shadows as people buy, sell, collect and seek out happiness and contentment in things that cannot satisfy the human heart that is made for God.

We are called to be counter-cultural and live simply with the proper attitudes toward possession in our respective states in life. The virtue of simplicity lived by religious and laymen and laywomen shows that the things of this world are passing away and that the eternal kingdom of God awaits us.

## **HUMILITY**

“Humility is the recognition that all good comes from God. It is the recognition of our lowliness and faults accompanied by exuberant confidence in God.”

Reflection:

All good comes from our loving and merciful God. Even our good desires and good works owe their inspiration to God. Humility acknowledges that we are nothing without God. At the same time, humility acknowledges we are everything God wants us to be when we surrender to him and follow his will and way in our lives.

“Humility involves self-emptying. This entails loving to be unknown and abandoned. It means avoiding the applause of the world. It involves taking the last place and loving the hidden life. Humility involves esteeming others as more worthy than yourself.”

Reflection:

Jesus, truly God and truly man, lived a hidden life for 30 years in Nazareth. He emerged from the silence of his hidden life to announce that the kingdom of God had arrived.

Like Christ, we should value silence and the hidden life. It is only when we shut our ears to the noise and distracting sounds around us, and empty our hearts of worldly ambitions, that we discover our true calling as followers of the Author of Life. With Christ and with the Church we can announce that God’s kingdom excludes no one.

## **MEEKNESS**

“Meekness is approachability, gentleness, affability, and serenity of countenance toward those who approach us.”

Reflection:

To be meek requires strength of character. It invites us to resist the impulse to strike back at those who would challenge us to the point of anger. Channeling our anger into positive outlets requires effort and the exercise of virtue.

“Meekness is based on respect for the person and involves combining gentleness and firmness in our interpersonal relationships.”

Reflection:

Christ was meek. People flocked to him. He accepted and responded to each person, even those whose lives were steeped in sin. Meekness prepares our hearts to identify with the heart of Christ that opened itself to the needs of all people.

“Meekness entails enduring offenses with forgiveness and courage. We should treat gently even those who do us injury.”

Reflection:

Our Lord was crucified for our sins. Christ was mocked as he agonized on the cross. His response to those who mocked him and to those who ridiculed him and rejected him was to offer forgiveness. In our dealings with people who would harm us, we are called to reflect the meekness of Christ crucified.

## **MORTIFICATION**

“Mortification entails denial of the exterior senses: sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing. It also entails denial of the interior senses: understanding, memory and will.”

Reflection:

The practice of mortification helps to reorient our wills to follow God’s will more faithfully in our everyday lives. Saints are men, women and young people who put God’s will first in their lives. They strive to reject all that would distract them from God or weaken their resolve to follow the Gospel.

“There should be mortification of the passions so that all human passions are subjected to reason. Mortification aims at holy indifference and detachment.”

Reflection:

The practice of mortification should lead to spiritual and emotional integration. When passions are subjected to reason, our spiritual lives thrive. Mortification helps to check our unruly passions that shake our spiritual equilibrium.

## **ZEAL**

“If love of God is the fire, zeal is its flame. If love is the sun, then zeal is its ray.”

“Charity when it dwells in a soul takes complete possession of all its powers. It never rests. It is a fire that acts ceaselessly.”

Reflection:

Zeal is love on fire. Fire in the natural world illuminates, heats, and purifies. In the spiritual life, zeal operates as a divine fire. The zealous soul can bring God’s light into the darkest of situations and circumstances in life. The zealous soul can bring the purifying love of Christ into the lives of those who have been seduced into sinful lives. Zeal is the fire of God’s love that cannot be extinguished by evil.

“Zeal expresses itself in the willingness to go anywhere to spread the reign of Christ. Zeal expresses itself in the willingness to die for Christ. It entails the work for the salvation of souls.”

Reflection:

Zeal knows no limits. It is love on fire that allows men, women and young people to unselfishly and generously surrender their lives for their faith and for the salvation of souls.

### **TO WHOM ARE THE MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE GOSPEL OF LIFE SENT?**

The richness of the Gospel of life is to be shared with all people. This sharing begins with family members, friends, co-parishioners, and co-workers. However, through a specific commitment to the pro-life apostolate, the Missionary Servants of the Gospel of Life identify with the spiritually destitute and bring Christ's message of hope and liberation to them.

### **WHAT OTHER SPIRITUAL PRACTICES AND TRADITIONS DO THE MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE GOSPEL OF LIFE INCORPORATE INTO THEIR LIVES?**

These practices are formally stated in the Rule of Life of the  
Servants of the Gospel of Life.

1. To the extent that is possible, they participate at daily Mass.
2. They strive to commit themselves to at least one hour of Eucharistic adoration each week.
3. They seek out frequent and regular reception of the Sacrament of Penance.
4. They wear a medal or ring of the Immaculate Conception, the patroness of this religious family. Devotions, novenas and other prayerful practices leading to the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe are recommended.
5. They recite the Daily Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Our Lady's image as the Immaculate Conception or Our Lady of Guadalupe should have a prominent place in each home.
6. They engage in a pro-life apostolate, even if that engagement is primarily through prayer and sacrifice.
7. They recite the rosary daily.
8. They pray for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, especially in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

9. On Saturdays, they honor St. Vincent de Paul by praying for his intercession. His image should be visible in each home.

10. They are devoted to St. Joseph, the Patron of the Universal Church. He is honored and seen as our guardian in all temporal and spiritual matters related to the apostolate. Novenas to St. Joseph and other devotional practices are encouraged during the month of March. A statue of St. Joseph should be visible in each home.

11. A formal Act of Consecration will be made when an individual becomes a Missionary Servant of the Gospel of Life. It is prayed before the image of Our Lady in a ceremony that incorporates lay associates:

#### ACT OF CONSECRATION

HAIL MARY, VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE AND IMMACULATE ONE FROM THE MOMENT OF YOUR CONCEPTION, THE LORD OF LIFE IS WITH YOU.

THIS DAY I, (Name and Mystery), VENERATE YOUR IMAGE AND CONSECRATE MYSELF TO YOU UNDER THE TITLE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

TO YOU, DEAR MOTHER, WHO ARE DESCRIBED AS THAT WOMAN ADORNED WITH THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE STARS (REV. 12:1), I ENTRUST AND DEDICATE MY ENTIRE LIFE.

MOTHER OF LIFE, TEACH ME TO BE FAITHFUL, HUMBLE AND SUBMISSIVE TO THE WILL OF THE FATHER AS YOU WERE AT THE ANNUNCIATION.

TEACH ME TO BE SELF-GIVING AND GENEROUS AS YOU DEMONSTRATED IN YOUR VISIT TO ELIZABETH.

TEACH ME TO EMBRACE SILENCE, PRAYER AND ADORATION, AS YOU KNELT BEFORE THE CHRIST-CHILD IN THE MANGER.

TEACH ME TO ABANDON MYSELF TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE, AS YOU DID IN YOUR FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

TEACH ME TO LIVE POORLY AND SIMPLY AS YOU DID IN NAZARETH.

TEACH ME TO BE COURAGEOUS AND STEADFAST IN THE FAITH, WHEN PAIN AND SUFFERING ARE EXPERIENCED, FOLLOWING YOUR EXAMPLE AT THE FOOT OF YOUR SON'S CROSS.

TEACH ME TO REJOICE AS YOU DID AT THE RESURRECTION, WHEN CHRIST CONQUERED SIN AND DEATH.



TEACH ME TO HOPE AND YEARN FOR THE KINGDOM TO COME, AS YOU PRAYED TO YOUR SON IN HIS ASCENSION TO THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER.

VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE AND IMMACULATE ONE, ABOVE ALL, TEACH ME TO BE A MISSIONARY SERVANT OF THE GOSPEL OF LIFE, WHOSE SOLE DESIRE IS TO GIVE GREATER HONOR AND GLORY TO YOUR SON, THROUGH A LIFE OF LOVING SERVICE.

O MARY, CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN, PRAY FOR US WHO ARE CONSECRATED TO YOU AND HAVE RECOURSE TO YOU.

### **OTHER DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS**

#### **DAILY PRAYER FOR PRIESTS**

Jesus, Eternal Priest, keep all Thy priests within the shelter of Thy Sacred Heart, where none may harm them.

Keep unstained their anointed hands which daily touch Thy Sacred Body. Keep unsullied their lips purpled with Thy Precious Blood.

Keep pure and unearthly their hearts sealed with the sublime marks of Thy glorious priesthood.

Let Thy holy love surround them and shield them from the world's contagion. Bless their labors with abundant fruit, and may the souls to whom they have ministered be here below their joy and consolation and in Heaven their beautiful and everlasting crown. Amen

O Mary, Queen of the clergy, pray for us; obtain for us a number of holy priests.

#### **DAILY PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE, THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

Hail Mary, Virgin of Guadalupe, and Immaculate One from the moment of your conception, the Lord of Life is with you! Today and always we entrust and dedicate ourselves to you who served as the sanctuary, tabernacle and loving mother of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Mother most holy, we ask you, who treasured all things in your heart, to instruct us on the deeper meaning of life's mysteries and help us to follow in your footsteps of holiness.

Teach us to be faithful, humble and submissive to the will of the Father as you were at the Annunciation.

Teach us to be self-giving and generous as you demonstrated in your visit to Elizabeth.

Teach us to embrace silence, prayer and adoration, as you knelt before the Christ-Child in the manger.

Teach us to abandon ourselves to Divine Providence as you did in your flight into Egypt.

Teach us to live simply and poorly as you did in Nazareth.

Teach us to be courageous and steadfast in the faith when pain and intense suffering are experienced, following your example at the foot of your Son's cross.

Teach us to rejoice as you did at the resurrection, when Christ conquered sin and death.

Teach us to hope and to yearn for the kingdom to come, as you prayed to your Son in his ascension to the right hand of the Father.

O Virgin of Guadalupe and Immaculate One, whose presence on Pentecost Sunday with the Apostles reminds us that the most sublime calling in the Christian life is to service, teach us to be zealous Missionary Servants of the Gospel of Life, all for the glory of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **PRAYER TO SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL**

St. Vincent, we honor you as the loving servant of the poor and missionary of charity. As Missionary Servants of the Gospel of Life, we strive to follow your way of service and believe that you will assist us in our needs that are both apostolic and personal.

We pray that you will guide us in our special calling to neglect no one for whom our Lord has died.

Teach us to be true servants of Christ so that we may bring the liberating truth of the Gospel to all who are held captive by sin.

Help us to heal the broken hearted and to see in the poor and abandoned the face of our crucified Lord who must be served in charity.

We ask you to hear our personal petitions as we place them before you in the silence of our hearts ...

Apostle of charity, hear our petitions and intercede for us, if it be the good God's will for these prayers to be granted. Amen.