

IMMACULATE

O Queen, conceived in plenitude of grace,
Thy innocence today we celebrate.
How shall we praise thee—we, a fallen race—
Or what compare to thee,
Virgin Immaculate?

The lily nestling in the woodland nook,
Unblemished smiling in its nature state,
The pearly cascade of the mountain brook,
Seem spotless, without taint,
Yet not immaculate!

The purest gold or gem of perfect ray
That Nature's spacious womb can generate,
Or flawless pearl earth's kings might well display,
But faintly trace thy
Purity immaculate.

The eastern sun esthetic eyes may please,
With rays that kiss the morning inchoate,
The zephyr bosomed on the summer seas
Is also sweet and pure,
But thou—immaculate!

Let swift imagination wing its flight
O'er earth's sun-chastened beauties delicate;
Traverse the glittering canopy of night,
Nor find aught else as thee—
Alone immaculate.

All fair art thou without a stain or spot,
From life's first moment incontaminate;
The holiest work Creator's hand has wrought,
Superlatively pure,
Conceived immaculate.

As Virgin Eve, with pristine grace replete,
So thou; who scorned the Serpent's furious hate,
Who crushed his loathsome head beneath thy feet,
By merits of thy Son,
Mother Immaculate.

As Eve's unholy league with Prince of Night
Did Satan's power on earth initiate,
So thy alliance with the God of Light
Loosed Sin's enslaving chains,
Victress immaculate.

Thou, privileged with thy virginity,
In our salvation to participate,
Pray now, O mother of divinity,
For us who pray to thee,
Our Queen immaculate.

Sweet Patroness of Learning's vast array
Wherever Christian dogmas educate,
Bless us Mother of Wisdom, here today;
Light thou the studious path,
Our Guide Immaculate.

Be thou our hope in each despondent hour,
Prove ever our celestial advocate;
Be thou our strength, display to us thy power,
Unworthy though we be,
Lady Immaculate.

Let not Satanic wiles confuse our mind,
Keep thou our thoughts—our actions ordinate;
That, entering Death's portals we shall find
Eternal peace through thee,
Mary Immaculate!

—Bartholomew Reilly, O. P.

(Composed for Catholic University celebration, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1917.)